



NAVY NEWS

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Eye of the hunter... 20-year-old Mne Michael Yianni of Alpha Company, 40 Commando, takes aim on Pentewan Beach on a deceptively fine winter's morning.

The 'invasion' of the sands near St Austell was the last act of Exercise South-West Sword, the warm-up by amphibious forces, including helicopter carrier HMS Ocean, committed to Taurus 09.

The task group, led by amphibious flagship HMS Bulwark, is the largest naval deployment of 2009, heading for the Mediterranean and Far East.

Picture: LA(Phot) Al Macleod, 40 Commando

AMPHIBIOUS SPECIAL

**TASK FORCE
HEADS EAST**

**RFA LARGS BAY
IN FALKLANDS**

**NEW GUNBOAT
FOR MARINES**

**DARING'S DAY
WELCOME HOME
FOR DESTROYER**

**ARK ROYAL IV
CUTAWAY POSTER**

TAURUS SEASON

A day not to



IT WAS here that it all began.

One early spring day in 2003. A press of the button and a laser began cutting its way through plates of steel inside a giant shed.

It was here on a summer's day in 2005 that a bow section, floated on a barge, was towed past the Round Tower on its sluggish journey north to join the fledgling vessel taking shape on the Clyde.

And it was here, on a dank, murky winter's day in 2009 that the same bow – now firmly attached to the rest of the ship – emerged from the Solent mist.

To be sure, the weather could have been better.

"There are moody pictures – and then there are invisible ones," complained Reuters' cameraman Luke Macgregor, one of a myriad of mediamen mustered on the Portsmouth seafloor.

But there was something about the conditions which seemed strangely appropriate for the destroyer billed by the media as "the Royal Navy's first stealth ship" – the ship whose 8,000-tonne bulk has the ability to appear no larger than a fishing trawler on other ships' radars.

For a moment the weak January sun broke through the cloud as the destroyer approached her home for the first time.

"Sun shines on the righteous," smiled Angela Whitbread. "It is a good omen."

She, her husband Bob, and a group of 'old Darings' – veterans of the previous warship to bear the name – gathered on Portsmouth historic city walls.

Draped over the side of the tower a bright banner: Good luck from the old Daring to the new Daring.

They had seen pictures of her, perhaps seen her on TV.

Images have never really conveyed the size of Daring – or her 21st-Century lines.

Up close, Daring is strikingly different from her predecessors – the lack of sharp angles and deck clutter give her an austere, elegant silhouette and a futuristic appearance.

To some, Daring's angles, her seemingly oversized main mast with its 'spinning egg' radar, were nothing new.

Many of the legions of onlookers and photographers who lined the walls to see her enter her home port had also been there to see her bow section leave more than three years before.

Many live in the distinctive shadow of her radar which sits atop a test centre on Portsmouth Hill.

A few had been privileged to watch her hurry down a slipway on the Clyde on a February day in 2006, a day no less dank, no less cold.

All heard the thunder of her 15-gun salute as she passed Southsea Common – and the seven-salvo response from Fort Blockhouse.

All heard the roar of two RAF Eurofighter Typhoons – a stealth flypast, if ever there was one, as few could make out the jets through the low cloud.

All heard the cheers which cascaded along the sea wall like a domino topple.

Few heard the popping of champagne on Round Tower as the old Darings toasted the arrival.

"We had to wet the baby's head with a bit of champers," said Mr Whitbread, a steward in the old ship.

Stewards are no more – they now bear the cumbersome (and not especially loved) title of logistician (catering services (delivery)).

It isn't just the change of title which previous generations of sailors will struggle to comprehend.

Inside Daring the differences continue.

There is the increased space (the ship is designed for a company of just 190) the surprisingly small wardroom, an operations room which is large, spacious, and even opens on to daylight, and the hugely improved living quarters.

Like most ships out of build, Daring isn't very homely yet – she needs the pictures, the carpets, the furniture and the luxuries which the shipbuilders are not contracted to supply.

But the sailors who've served in other ships are still getting used to this level of comfort.

Lt Sven Johansen, Daring's DMEO, has been in the Navy for 22 years and is probably the only man onboard to have seen service in Types 42s, 23s, a Leander and HMS Intrepid.

"People from 42s can't believe the size and standards of the accommodation we've got here. But for 20 or 30 per cent of the ship's company it's their first sea draft – apart from HMS Bristol perhaps – so they maybe don't realise how different this is," he said.

He added: "The ship's company are very upbeat about it. They like the challenges of the new technologies that a T45 brings and being able to question many of the boundaries in how the ship may be operated."

He admitted: "It does make me feel old, knowing all the changes I've seen. To think I started on steam – which was extremely manpower intensive with very little automation – to a ship that is a step forward in technology encompassing much automation."

It isn't just technology which sets D32 apart. She is twice the size of the Type 42s (she contains more steel than Blackpool Tower), twice the size of the Counties, bigger even than Bristol, and three times the size of the previous Daring, D05.

So she doesn't share technology or size with her long-gone predecessor, but she does share more than 'just' a name.

"It's definitely a sight worth seeing – a different era completely, the highest technology," said former D05 cook (another title condemned to the history books, sadly) Kelvin Bowden.

"But then the old D-class were the best destroyers we had at the time."

So there's a lot to live up to – not just the name, but the media interest and the expectation, as CO Capt Paul Bennett explains.

"There is a sense onboard that a bit of Naval

history is in the making," he added.

"From my point of view it's quite a privilege to bring this ship into her home port."

"There is a huge amount of public interest in her, and she's getting a lot of media attention, which is very important, because we need to tell the public what we do."

He added: "It makes the sailors even more proud of their ship – they all realise that they've got something very special here."

Already impressed by Daring are the ship's company of flagship HMS Ark Royal, who were treated to a brief demonstration of the destroyer's manoeuvrability and speed off the Isle of Wight.

Daring was heading for the West Country and a brief exercise with the Royal Marines in Plymouth Sound.

Ark was returning to Portsmouth from a brief tour of the UK (see page 10).

For 20 minutes the RN of the 80s and the RN of the 00s manoeuvred side by side, exchanging formalities, before each ship in turn showed what she could do.

Given her age and size, Ark isn't quite as nimble or swift as Daring, whose incredible acceleration left Ark's CO Capt John Clink agog.

"She truly is a fantastic warship and one of which we should all be proud," he added.

Not all that is Daring has been taking place in the cold murk and mist of the Solent and Channel.

Six hundred and 50 miles away in the rather sunnier (and warmer) climes of the Mediterranean, the weapon which will give Daring (and her five sisters) its bite was successfully fired for the second time.

Sea Viper was fired from a test barge and (very) promptly intercepted a Mirach drone 'skipping' over the Med.

Sea Viper? You might know it by its more traditional (and less inspiring) name, PAAMS: Principal Anti-Air Missile System.

To coincide with Daring's first entry into Portsmouth and following a long list of similarly-monikered weapons – Sea Cat, Sea Dart, Sea Slug, Seawolf – PAAMS was officially renamed.

It is being tested off the Île du Levant (nine tenths missile range, one tenth nudist colony...) between Toulon and St Tropez.

A 12,000-ton trials barge, Longbow, serves as the test bed for the missile. It has a complete replica of the air defence equipment in a Type 45, including long-range and missile-directing radars, a combat control centre and missiles in their vertical launcher silos.

For its second firing, Sea Viper was charged with taking out a low-level incoming target.

Longbow launched a shorter range Aster 15 missile at a Mirach drone target – simulating a sea-skimming anti-ship missile – at close range and blasted it out of the sky.

The missiles are capable of speeds in excess of mach four (over 3,000mph) and use an innovative control system called 'Pif Paf' (but sadly for fans of the Great Soprendo, no 'puf') to manoeuvre in flight and complete their kill.

Global Reach begins on page 6


H.M.S. DARING



be mist

● (Clockwise from this page) An MOD police launch prepares to intercept Daring as she passes one of the Solent forts; sailors line the forecastle for the inaugural entry; the ship passes Round Tower and the Hot Walls for the first time; an unusual shot of Daring's bridge and main mast; a first encounter with HMS Ark Royal off the Isle of Wight





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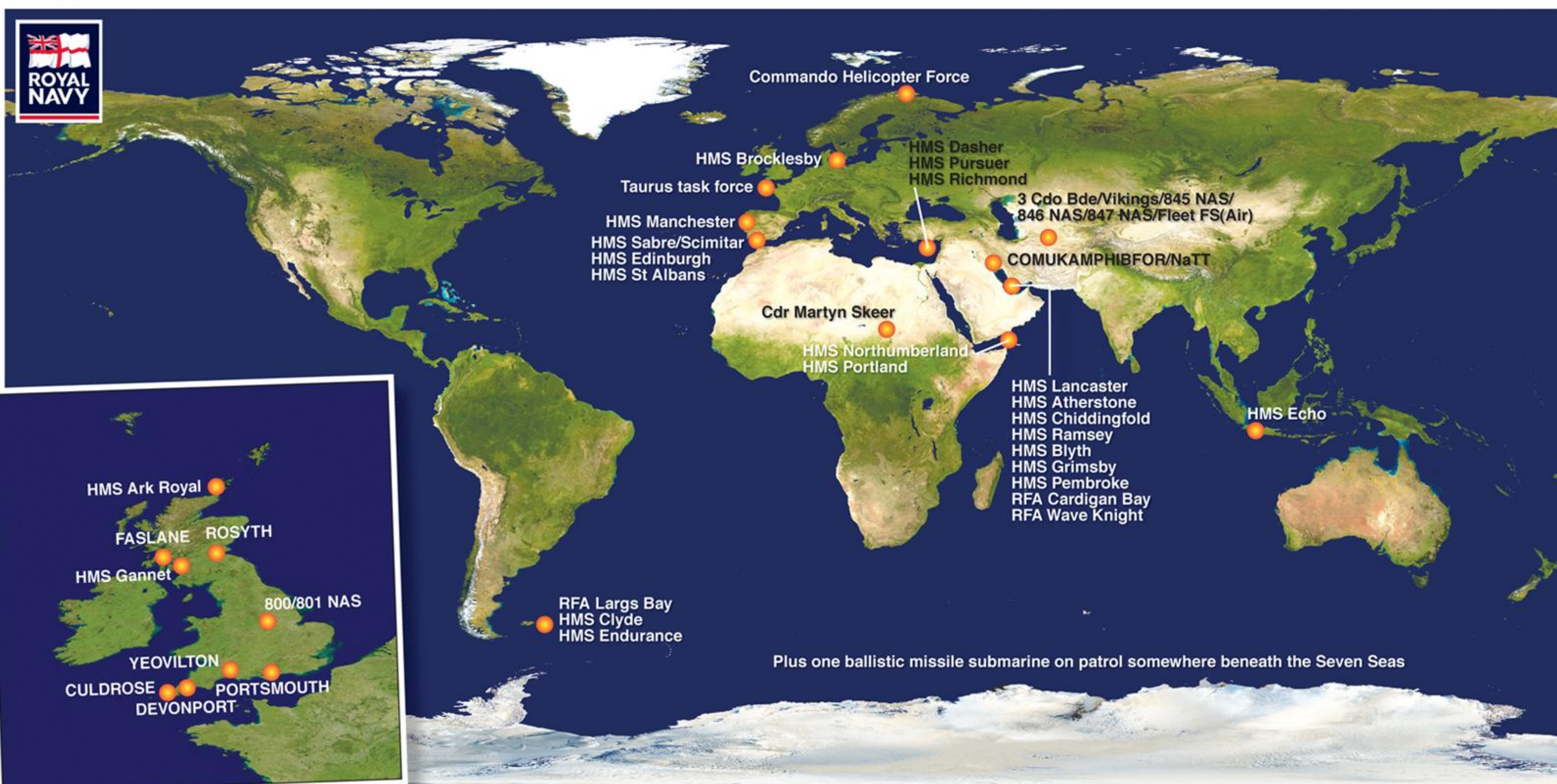
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GLOBAL REACH



Fleet Focus

IF EVER there is a month which demonstrates the varied global mission of the Senior Service it is this one.

Pirate chasing in the Indian Ocean. Amphibious operations in the Falklands and home waters. Survey work in the Far East. Combat and peacekeeping in Afghanistan.

We ought to, and we shall, begin in Afghanistan where a series of bold, calculated strikes by **3 Commando Brigade** – in particular **42** and **45 Commandos** – smashed Taliban drugs factories, headquarter compounds and deprived the insurgents of at least £50m income (see pages 16-17). Vital to all RM operations in Helmand and Kandahar is the contribution made by **Royal Marines Reservists**. We look at their role on pages 22-23.

HMS Lancaster has bowed out of protecting Iraq's oil platforms, handing over duties to her sister **HMS Richmond** (see right). Richmond received a mauling from winter storms in the Bay of Biscay, as did her sibling **HMS St Albans**, sailing to the Med to assume NATO duties (see page 9).

NATO duties are finally over for **HMS Roebuck**, which served as the flagship of an international minehunting force until handing duties to the Danes (see page 9). An RN presence in the group is maintained, however, in the shape of **HMS Brocklesby** (see opposite).

If you really want to go minehunter-spotting this month, go to Bahrain where there were four Sandowns – half the force – meeting up. **HMS Ramsey** and **Blyth** are heading home after 2½ years in the Gulf... and **HMS Pembroke** and **Grimsby** are taking their place (see page 8).

To the south, sister 23s **HMS Northumberland** (under an EU force led by the RN) and **HMS Portland** (under a new US-led task group) keep the pressure on the pirates in the Indian Ocean. See pages 11-13 for a comprehensive round-up.

Just leaving UK shores is the Taurus 09 amphibious task group, led by **HMS Bulwark** and including **HMS Ocean**. The RN-RM-FAA force geared up for its deployment to the Mediterranean and Far East by invading Cornwall (see page 15) and it is taking a Gucci new gunboat to play with (see page 24).

HMS Manchester is bound for the Falklands via Portugal and Cape Verde (see page 9). The destroyer takes over from **RFA Largs Bay**, paying her inaugural visit to the islands to take part in Army-Air Force-Navy exercises (see pages 25-27). She's also our 'ship of the month' (see page 14).

HMS Endurance is about to 'piggy back' home from the South Atlantic after her engine room flood (see opposite), but things are rather brighter for her fellow hydrographic squadron companion **HMS Echo** which has just arrived in Jakarta on the latest stage of her mammoth five-year survey deployment (see page 8).

At home, the heavy winter snowfall demanded the bravery of **HMS Gannet's** fliers in and around Loch Lomond (see opposite).

The weather was rather kinder to **HMS Illustrious** and **Ark Royal** which both visited Loch Long (not at the same time) to load/offload ammunition respectively. Ark subsequently continued around the Scottish coast to Scapa Flow for a rare visit by a carrier to the great natural harbour (see page 10).

Bowing out after more than a quarter of a century's service is **HMS Southampton** which was formally decommissioned in Portsmouth. She hands the baton of air defence to **HMS Daring** which entered Pompey for the first time on a very murky January day (see pages 2-3).

And finally... You will no doubt have read about strategic missile submarines **HMS Vanguard** and **Le Triomphant** colliding during their respective patrols. We cannot add any more to what has already been said – officially and unofficially – but we can say that the strapline on the foot of the map above remains pertinent...



THIS sight – HMS Lancaster's Merlin heading towards the Khawr Al Amaya oil terminal at sunset – is now but a memory for the men and women of the Red Rose.

After six months on patrol around the two platforms (and five months in defence watches), the Type 23 frigate should be back in Blighty – Pompey to be precise – right about the time you're reading this.

Midnight on February 3 was the moment the warship relinquished her duties as guardian of the platforms which are responsible for so much of Iraq's GDP.

Not once during the six patrols of the tip of the Gulf were the two platforms threatened by terrorists and foes intent upon damaging them – and destabilising Iraq itself. More than 300 vessels and craft were quizzed by Lancaster to ensure pumping from the two huge offshore 'filling stations' proceeded safely.

The last patrol proved to be particularly demanding. For besides keeping an eye out for potential enemies, Lancaster also had to contend with not one but two teams of inspectors.

A mobile FOST team tested all the ship's company to ensure that Lancaster was as on the ball as she was during Operational Sea Training, while the Naval Flying Standards Flight were keen to see the embarked flight from 829 NAS at work in their natural environment.

"With the end of our sixth and last patrol, there was cause for quiet reflection on what the ship's company has achieved during the deployment," said CO Cdr Rory Bryan.

"The ship has helped to maintain the integrity of Iraq's territorial waters and helped enable millions of barrels of oil to have been safely pumped.

"We've also played a key role in helping to train Iraqi sailors and marines to allow them to work towards taking responsibility for protection of the platforms."

Lancaster's place is being taken by **HMS Richmond** which ran into the same monstrous seas upon leaving Portsmouth as her sister St Albans endured (see page 9).

Not surprisingly, Richmond was glad to reach the Rock, allowing a few cosmetic touch-ups, eradicating the rust streaks left by the Biscay battering.

The frigate briefly hosted CINC Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope who sat down with the ship's company to chat about their impending Gulf tour of duty and to listen to some of their concerns.

He left the ship convinced the sailors were "well-motivated" and "well-prepared".

He added: "The positive attitude I encountered clearly bodes well for the deployment and I have no doubt that Richmond will meet the challenges Telic will place before her with grit and professionalism."

Some of that grit was evident on the football pitch in Gib with a 4-3 victory ground out against HMS Edinburgh.

Picture: LA(Phot) Gaz Weatherston, FRPU North

Sun sets on Lancaster

Peak performances



WITH an ominous cloud of sleet and snow swirling around The Cobbler, a Sea King from HMS Gannet flies to the rescue of a climber who fell more than 100ft as winter tightened its grip on Scotland.

The Kings of the Mountains found themselves in demand in the worst of the winter weather, first on the 2,900ft peak near Arrochar, then at Ben Lomond.

The Cobbler proved the more challenging rescue thanks to horrendous weather conditions.

Pilots Lt Cdr Bryan Nicholas (Gannet's CO) and Lt Cdr Stuart Pike, observer Lt Tim Barker and aircrewman PO Marcus 'Wiggy' Wigfull found the climbing casualty – but were not able to hover at the scene and pick her up.

Instead, the Sea King flew down The Cobbler to pick up Arrochar Mountain Rescue Team, fly them up the slope to a spot as close as they could get to the injured mountaineer and leave the casualty in the capable hands of the volunteers. She was subsequently carried down the hill to a waiting ambulance and treatment for a suspected broken shoulder plus slight head injuries.

As night set in, so too did the clouds and the Sea King was grounded in Arrochar. It cleared sufficiently for the helicopter to be able to return to Prestwick... only for a fresh SOS to come in.

This time, two men in their mid-30s were reported missing on the east side of Ben Lomond, eight miles east of The Cobbler.

One of the men had lost his glasses on the Ben and, as a result, was only able to make very slow progress down the mountain as he was essentially unable to see.

Despite being experienced, well-equipped and starting to head down in daylight, the duo's descent was so slow in deteriorating conditions, that they had felt it necessary to raise the alarm.

Twenty-three members of Lomond Mountain Rescue were already on the slopes in an effort to find the men in the pitch dark.

The crew were able to speak to the

stranded climbers by mobile, which helped refine their position, and also ask them to flash a torch which would help in the search. Using night vision goggles, the helicopter's crew located the flashing torchlight and winched the climbers to safety before delivering them to the rendezvous point at Rowardennan, on the east shore of Loch Lomond.

"Conditions really were quite testing for both of these rescues," said Lt Cdr Nicholas. "Not being able to hover at The Cobbler was very frustrating as we would have been able to get the injured woman off the mountain a lot quicker that way."

"Searching in the dark is always tricky. Luckily, though, we were able to track the men down quite quickly, which, in the plummeting temperatures, was what it was all about – you really don't want to be stuck on the mountain in those kind of conditions overnight."

"But they had got a torch with them and they were able to use that to allow us to see them more easily and, therefore, quickly."

"So it was a job well done by all those involved, including both the mountain rescue teams we were working with."

The Sea King and crew finally touched down back at base at 2am after ten hours away conducting their rescues.

They were back in the air the following night to airlift a 30-year-old man to hospital from Lochgoilhead in Argyll after he'd suffered back injuries while sledging (ice on the roads prevented the ambulance making the journey).

Picture: LA(Phot) Iggy Roberts, FRPU North

Endurance hitches home

ICE ship HMS Endurance is gearing up for a 9,000-mile 'piggy back' home after almost sinking in the Southern Ocean.

The Red Plum's ship's company were on the verge of abandoning the Antarctic survey vessel when her engine room flooded in the Magellan Strait shortly before Christmas.

Sustained damage control efforts by the sailors and the assistance of Chilean tugs ensured the ice ship did not founder and she was eventually towed to Mare Harbour in the Falklands.

There a reduced ship's company are preparing the ship for the long trip home before Endurance finally undergoes extensive repairs.

The floodwater not only wrecked Endurance's machinery compartments, it also spilled over into C Deck – mainly accommodation for the ship's company, some of whom lost thousands of pounds worth of personal kit, as well as irreplaceable family mementos.

Huge heavy lift vessel Target, whose central section can submerge allowing Endurance to be floated on and carried home, is due to bring her back to Portsmouth by the end of March.

A substantial amount of equipment has to be removed from the Red Plum before she can be moved on to the Target, other kit – such as lighting and ventilation – is being restored to working order, and machinery and compartments damaged by the sea water are being preserved.

"It is too early to accurately assess when the ship will be fully repaired and ready to go safely back to sea again," said CO Capt Gavin Pritchard.

"It is the Navy's intent to get the ship back to patrolling Antarctica as soon as safely possible thereafter."

"On a personal note, I remain very proud of my ship's company. Since the flood commenced, there has been a substantial and ongoing effort to keep the ship safe."



Ready for the wurst

YOU can escape the UK, you can sometimes even escape its weather, but you can never escape FOST.

Actually for 'FOST' read 'SAGA', the German equivalent of FOST... and no more forgiving.

Just days after joining NATO's Mine Countermeasures Group 1, HMS Brocklesby arrived in Neustadt, a picture-postcard town on the Baltic coast about 30 miles southeast of Kiel.

Appearances can be deceptive. Neustadt is also home to the Deutsche Marine's *Schadensabwehr und Gefechtsausbildung* (Damage control and combat training or SAGA) school.

The NATO mine force spent two weeks in the hands of SAGA. It was anything but a holiday (groan – Ed).

The task group arrived to protestors (bearing an uncanny resemblance to SAGA staff...) waving banners and placards 'Go home NATO!' and rioters trying to force their way on to the ships.

After the unrest subsided came the terror threat and a suspected bomb hidden aboard the Latvian ship LVNS Talivaldis. It fell to Brocklesby's ship's company – and her diving team who are trained in bomb disposal – to root out the offending explosive device.

Riot. Bombs. Fire must be

next. It was. Brocklesby's engine room went up in (canned) smoke. The canned smoke spread to a neighbouring German ship. Soon the jetty was filled with damage control and first aid parties, local firefighters and medics, while the Brits evacuated 'casualties' (pictured above).

Ashore, SAGA had more in store for the Portsmouth-based sailors: real firefighting training (and a chance to see how quickly air is used up under stressful situations), stopping flooding and sea survival – which involved donning an immersion suit and life jacket in less than two minutes before jumping into the Baltic and clambering into a raft.

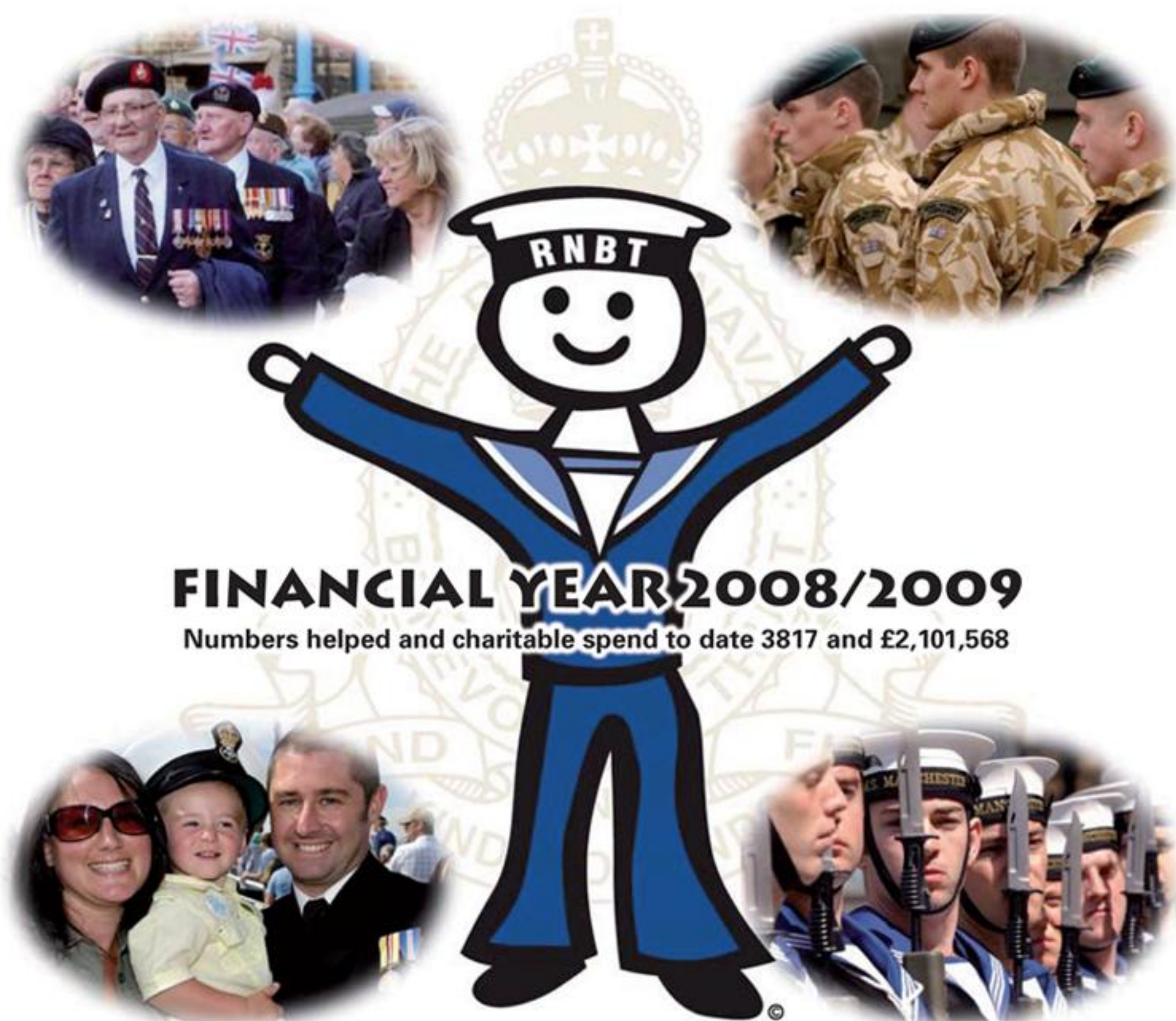
The week in Neustadt wasn't all exercises and hard work; there was a touch of friendly competition in the sporting arena – cross-country running, swimming and football.

The Brits won the run, took second place in the swimming relay and qualified for the semis of the football contest... where they ran into the Germans (inevitably) and lost 1-0 (also inevitably).

And then it was back to sea for another SAGA special: salvage work, (drill) mine clearance and a major disaster exercise among others. The Germans know how to have fun...

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RLC need TLC from HMS

REFIT. £20m. Sea boat. £90,000 (ish). Saving the Army's blushes. Priceless.

The Army has the quick thinking (and bravery) of PO 'Brum' Tuite to thank for saving one of their landing craft which was in danger of sinking six miles off the Dorset coast.

Thanks to a freak wave, the craft's landing ramp dropped down and the English Channel raced in.

Two of the three crew had to be winched to safety by a Coastguard Search and Rescue helicopter, while the third struggled to keep the vessel from foundering.

The Royal Logistics Corps craft, heading from Marchwood to Portland, sent out an SOS – picked up by HMS Sutherland.

The frigate was carrying out engineering trials off Portland in the wake of her £20m refit in Rosyth.

She immediately dispatched her sea boat with a rescue party, led by Brum.

He jumped waist-deep into the water sloshing (technical term – Ed) around the craft and using a grappling hook and the boat's winch managed to haul the damaged ramp back up.

The Swanage lifeboat soon arrived on the scene with a pump to clear the water and to escort the stricken craft back to harbour for urgent repairs.

"I know there is a lot of rivalry with the Army, but when the chips are down, we are always there to help out," said Brum.

As for Sutherland, she's resumed her work-up ahead of a summer/autumn deployment to the Caribbean on an anti-drugs patrol.

IT'S all change in the Gulf with HMS Ramsey and Blyth swapping places with HMS Grimsby and Pembroke, bringing the curtain down on two years in Bahrain.

The former are bound for Blighty, the latter have got a lengthy stint in the Middle East ahead of them.

For most of Grimsby's and Pembroke's sailors, the Gulf is not a new experience, however.

Every ship's company of the eight Sandown-class mine countermeasures vessels has been rotated through the Gulf during Ramsey and Blyth's stay... which will be repeated for Pembroke and Grimsby.

The aim of the Sandowns – operating alongside Hunts HMS Atherstone and Brocklesby – is to work with other navies in the Gulf region and to deal with the leftovers of conflict at sea in this troubled part of the world, such as declaring the waters around Iraq mine-free.

Before departing Bahrain, the old hands formally presented the operational baton to their successors as half the entire MCM1 Squadron gathered 6,500 miles from Faslane.

"The impact of these small ships should never be underestimated," said the senior Royal Navy officer in Bahrain, Cdre Tim Lowe – the UK Maritime Component Commander.

"They provide an invaluable contribution and visible reminder of our enduring commitment."

"They never fail to amaze me as they constantly exploit their professionalism and resources to enhance stability and security



The Royal Maritime Club
(Formerly The Royal Sailors' Home Club)

-NOTICE-

The 145th Annual General Meeting of the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth, will be held in the Trafalgar Ballroom of the club on Tuesday 21st April 2009 at 1030.

Commanding Officers are requested to encourage maximum attendance from their ships and establishments.
ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

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Commanding Officers are requested to encourage maximum attendance from their ships and establishments.
ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

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No rest for the Busy Bee

WITH a nickname like the Busy Bee you can expect to be, er, busy.

And so it has proved. Six months after returning from a very demanding Gulf deployment escorting the US carrier Harry S Truman, HMS Manchester is off on another major tour of duty.

This time it's to the cooler climes of the Falklands – although there are spells in the Caribbean and southern Pacific during the seven-month deployment.

Apart from friends and family, the destroyer was waved off from Portsmouth by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, Cllr Mavis Smitheman.

The politician spent the first few hours of the deployment aboard the warship, receiving a fairly comprehensive insight into life aboard, before parting company with the ship as it headed south and she headed back 'oop north'.

The destroyer has a pretty varied programme – and mission.

There's strangling drug runners (metaphorically) in the Caribbean, providing a reassuring presence to locals in the Falklands, probably a bit of salsa in Brazil, as well as a trip round the Horn to visit Chile and Peru.

Portugal, rather closer to home, was the first port of call for the ship and a brief visit to Lisbon. The ship hosted Portuguese dignitaries for an official reception, while her sailors visited the Maritime Analysis and Operational Centre (Narcotics), one of the global intelligence hubs for the war on drugs trafficking.

From there it was on to the Cape Verde Islands and a particularly vibrant welcome from 160 pupils of Escola Capelinha Fazenda Praia school, who were treated to a tour of the destroyer.



PROOF of just how unforgiving Biscay can be was provided by HMS St Albans (much to the chagrin of her ship's company) as she headed for the Med through a succession of storms.

The Portsmouth-based Type 23 frigate is serving with NATO's Maritime Group 2 on its 'guardians of the seas' mission around the Mediterranean.

She collected her Lynx flight, No.202 from 815 NAS in Yeovilton, then stocked up with shells, explosives, torpedoes, missiles and assorted ammo in Plymouth and then turned south.

Guz to the Med is quite a long way – long enough for the warship to be tossed around and things made rather unpleasant for the

180-plus sailors aboard (the roll on the above image, by LA(Phot) Pete Smith of FRPU East, is a 'mere' 12).

With typical RN understatement Biscay had, said CO Cdr Adrian Pierce, "certainly shaken the ship out".

Out. And up. And down. And left to right. Still, every cloud has a silver lining. On a crisp, clear morning the mountains of Morocco and the Rock of Gibraltar came into view and the Middle Sea was finally within grasp.

Nippy and zippy patrol boat HMS Scimitar welcomed St Albans into Gibraltar... then promptly proceeded to attack the frigate to test the ship's response to a 'fast inshore attack craft' onslaught.

The Biscay battering left the Saint needing some TLC once she entered the Mediterranean.

"The upper deck on a warm January day in the Med was a real contrast from the previous storm-tossed days, cooped up in the ship. The ship's company were pleased to see daylight again and enjoy some fresh air," said Cdr Pierce.

She's now attached to the NATO force and conducting Operation Active Endeavour, a Mediterranean-wide sweep tracking shipping, curbing the activities of drug/people smugglers and terrorists.

The force will, however, leave the Med behind for several weeks and patrol the shallower (and cooler) waters of the Baltic.

Come in No.1 your time is up

BRITAIN'S year in charge of one of Europe's two minehunting task forces formally came to an end in a wintry Copenhagen.

For the past 12 months, NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 has been in the hands of Cdr Chris Davies and his staff, based aboard the survey ship HMS Roebuck.

Those 12 months covered the shores of Aegean and North Africa, Baltic and Mediterranean waters, the Channel and British Isles among others.

There were six major 'live' exercises to run, three spells destroying historic ordnance (including a stint in the Channel), and two war games to test the group's readiness to act as NATO's Reaction Force.

With the Danes assuming command of the minehunting force from the RN, the force and flagship Roebuck headed to the Danish capital for a transfer of command ceremony.

Cdr Davies' successor, Cdr Henrik Rasmussen, is now leading the small ships towards the Middle Sea where they will take part in a major NATO exercise, Loyal Mariner.

Later in 2009 the group will cross the Pond to exercise along the Eastern Seaboard of Canada and the USA.

With Roebuck's departure to resume more traditional duties, the sole British presence in the force is now HMS Brocklesby (see page 7).

The task group is now NATO's oldest maritime commitment, dating back to 1973 under various nomenclatures (although it can trace its roots to the year before the organisation was formed).

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Monarchs of the glen

Picture: Lt Robbie Baillie, HMS Illustrious

AS 'PORTS' go, the jetty at Glenmullan on Loch Long is among the quieter quays in the British Isles.

But not this past month, for the isolated berth has hosted both of Britain's aircraft carriers.

And do not let the tranquil wintry scene above fool you.

HMS Illustrious may look at peace with night falling on the loch, but she's actually packed with heavy metal thunder.

The cranes and jetty on the left are part of the Glenmullan ammunition facility.

Lusty's about to do some weapons training off Plymouth, so she needed to stock up, hence the trip to the rather remote ammo depot (further up Loch Long from the nuclear missile storage facility at Coulport).

Once there, the bombheads were kept busy as ammo was lifted on to the flight deck, then moved around either manually, or by the carrier's fork lift trucks, before being safely stowed in the ship's magazine.

"The task of loading large bombs, torpedoes and ammunition on to a carrier is highly-challenging, involving significant planning and careful monitoring at every stage of the process to ensure the safety of the ship and her crew," explained Illustrious' Commander Air Engineering, Cdr Kieran O'Brien.

"All of it has to be stowed in magazines in a way that makes it ready for supplying to the flight deck when required."

While Lusty was 'tooling up', HMS Ark Royal visited the ammunition jetty to 'tool down' (she's spending much of 2009 undergoing an overhaul in Portsmouth). A rather more grandiose berth beckoned before she reached Scotland, however.

Liverpool's impressive new cruise liner terminal played host to Ark for the second time in seven months.

The carrier spent four days on the Mersey as 2009 opened – and locals showed no less enthusiasm to see Ark as on her previous stay in the height of summer.

For two days, the ship opened her gangway to visitors... and more than 10,000 people took the opportunity to tour the ship (donating £5,000 to the carrier's charities as a thank-you).

Equally delighted with Merseysiders' generosity were the volunteer fundraisers of the RN Historic Flight who do their utmost to keep vintage Fleet Air Arm aircraft in the skies – notably Swordfish, Sea Hawk and Sea Fury. They collected more than £3,000 courtesy of donations and sales of various FAA-related mementos.

So many people came aboard that there was an hour-long queue to see the 814 NAS Merlin on the flight deck, and almost as much interest in the rather more venerable bagger Sea King of 849

NAS also on display.

And it took a good two hours after the gangway was closed to finally clear visitors from the flight deck.

One in ten of Ark's ship's company is drawn from Merseyside and environs apparently – including AB(WS) Elizabeth Dawson, who celebrated her 21st birthday while the ship was in Liverpool. Her family, friends and shipmates helped her mark the milestone, as did the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Cllr Steven Rotherham.

Community coaches from Liverpool FC also climbed aboard to give Ark's football team a quick training session on the flight deck (see the sport pages).

"What a facility!" enthused Ark's CO Capt John Clink. "Liverpool is such a special place for the RN and Ark Royal in particular – the two previous ships to bear the famous name were built in Birkenhead."

"The last time I personally drove a carrier into Liverpool, we had to use the locks, which were only just big enough to accommodate us."

"The liner terminal allows the Navy and the Liverpool public much greater access – an obvious benefit to us both."

On the journey up to Merseyside from Portsmouth, the carrier hosted nine members of Yorkshire University Royal Navy Unit for four days' introduction to life in a big ship.

The students took part in numerous activities throughout the carrier, from watching Merlins

and Sea Kings conduct landing drills, to clambering around in the engine room compartments, carrying out watch duties on the bridge, and driving the ship on occasions during her passage north.

They were also introduced to the world of RN fitness, courtesy of a circuit session in the hangar under the watchful eye of clubz.

"It has been a fantastic experience and a great insight into the Royal Navy's lifestyle and a privilege to witness, first hand, its role day to day," said Philip Vollans, an architecture undergraduate from Sheffield University.

From Merseyside it was up to Glenmullan where aside from ammunitioning, the ship hosted a true legend of naval aviation.

John 'Jock' Moffat is one of those figures who truly has changed the course of history.

It was the pilot's Swordfish which struck the crippling blow to the German battleship Bismarck, jamming its rudder with a torpedo strike.

Hitler's flagship was promptly finished off by the Home Fleet (much to the chagrin of Jock and his 818 NAS comrades aboard HMS Ark Royal III who apparently fancied a crack themselves).

The veteran aviator, who has only recently hung up his flying helmet, was guest of honour at Ark's Burn's Night dinner.

He left the carrier with a montage of Ark Royal III and the recent wreath-laying ceremony

held over her wreck near Gibraltar at the tail end of 2008.

The history lesson for today's Ark continued further up the Scottish west coast when she anchored in Scapa Flow.

It is 70 years since one of the most daring – and tragic events – in Scapa's history, the sinking of HMS Royal Oak by U47, and 90 years since the most infamous, the scuttling of the High Seas Fleet.

"There is not a sailor alive who will not feel the hairs on the back of his neck tingle as he drops anchor in Scapa Flow," said Capt Clink.

"Scapa Flow does not have links with naval history – Scapa Flow is naval history."

And, by our reckoning, it's a good while since a carrier was in these waters.

So why not make the most of them?

The aim of Ark's visit was to test the leadership skills and initiative of the ship's company, who were sent on some typical and not-so-typical missions.

First, there was a downed Harrier GR9 pilot to rescue from somewhere near the isle of Flotta on the southern side of the great natural harbour.

Five junior rates and an URNU student were sent ashore with some basic kit including wooden staffs, hand-held radios, extra clothing and ration packs, and left to formulate a plan on how they would locate and evacuate the 'casualty' – the unfortunate ship's dummy, Fred.

Fred didn't take too long to locate (being bright orange probably helped, as did the fact that Flotta is smaller than four square miles – and a sizeable chunk of the island is taken up by an oil refinery).

In good *Blue Peter* fashion, using the two staffs and a couple of foulie jackets the rescuers created a makeshift stretcher and set about making the journey back to the carrier.

Meanwhile in the nearby village of Lyness, other Ark sailors had been sent ashore to talk to youngsters at North Walls Community School about life aboard the carrier and the 21st-Century RN.

Having answered all of the questions from the children (and helped the younger ones with Burns' Night preparations), the team set off to complete the second half of their mission: to gather information about the history of Scapa Flow...

...A task which is made somewhat easier thanks to the visitor centre located in the pumping house of the old Lyness Naval Base.

They also visited the Naval cemetery, not only the final resting place for many who served at Scapa, but also many of the 833 sailors lost when the Royal Oak went down.

All the Ark sailors returned to their ship with their notepads full of information – the next step in their Command, Leadership and Management training was to deliver a presentation to their shipmates about Scapa Flow and the place that it holds in the RN's history.



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RN & RM Children's Fund
311 Twyford Avenue
Portsmouth
PO2 8RN
Telephone: 023 9263 9534
Fax: 023 9267 7574
Email: rnchildren@btconnect.com

● Same loch, different ship... Ark Royal offloads ammunition at Glenmullan, as seen from a hillside in Argyll Forest Park

Picture: PO(Phot) Jon Hamlet, HMS Ark Royal





into the Lion's den



● HMS Portland manoeuvres at speed after escorting the P&O cruise ship Arcadia off the Horn of Africa

FIFTY suspected pirate attacks have been thwarted with the help of a Royal Navy-led European task group off Somalia in its first two months.

The head of EU Naval Force Somalia says the concerted effort to guillotine pirate activity in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean has "made a difference".

But Rear Admiral Philip Jones warns that the pirate threat is far from over – a fact underlined by the seizure of the German tanker Longchamp at the end of January.

Longchamp was the latest victim of an 'industry' which made an estimated £20m last year from hijacking merchantmen and holding ships and their crews to ransom.

Continued on page 12

STOP 50 PIRATE ATTACKS THWARTED STOP 43,000 TONNES OF FOOD DELIVERED STOP 2½ MILLION PEOPLE FED FOR A MONTH STOP NORT

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● HMS Portland escorts the cruise liner Arcadia and (below) the frigate approaches USNS Patuxent for a RAS
Pictures: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, FRPU East



● Action stations in HMS Northumberland... The 30mm (above) and the upper deck Minigun (above right) are manned as the frigate approaches the Somali capital of Mogadishu

Continued from page 11

The number of pirate attacks in 2008 doubled compared with the previous 12 months – and finally prompted a united international response.

The European Union mustered half a dozen ships – EU Naval Force Somalia – for the first military operation staged under the Brussels banner, Operation Atalanta.

Led by the RN and Rear Admiral Jones' battlestaff from Whale Island, but drawing military personnel from across the Union, the Northwood headquarters tries to shepherd shipping through the Gulf of Aden.

The force's principal mission is to ensure World Food Programme ships safely reach port in Somalia; two fifths of the country's populace relies on these UN handouts.

They receive close escort until they are in the safe bosom of port authorities.

Last month we reported the first ship, MV Semlow, arrived in Mogadishu under the watchful eye of HMS Northumberland.

Since then the frigate has escorted five more aid ships (see opposite) – three through the "lion's den", as the admiral calls it, of the

northern Somali coast.

Worthy as this cause is, the food programme mission accounts for the tiniest fraction of shipping in the region.

Twenty thousand ships (whose cargo includes seven per cent of the world's oil) pass through the Gulf of Aden each year.

They bunch together around the 'marine security corridor', an invisible box running along the Yemeni coast from Aden to Oman.

It is here, where the traffic is heaviest, that the pirates have struck – repeatedly.

There were 46 'approaches' in these waters in 2008 (ie the pirates buzzed a merchant ship but took no further action), 21 reported attacks and 21 actual hijackings.

The brigands care not for nationality or even cargo: a Chinese fishing vessel, a Ukrainian military transport, a Turkish tanker, a bulk carrier.

They care only for money – ransom, invariably paid out by shipping insurers after protracted negotiations.

Recently, however, there has been a lull in their activity.

It's partly down to the winter weather, but also the presence of the EU force – which is charged with safeguarding general shipping in the Gulf of Aden as well as its World Food Programme duties.

Aside from the embryonic EU group, there's a new Coalition Task Force 151, see below – and a fair smattering of warships from around the globe: Japan, Malaysia, Russia and China (the latter haven't sailed in these waters for half a millennium).

All have a common goal even if they have different masters and go about it in slightly different ways.

"Collectively, we can say we have deterred around 50 pirate attacks," said Rear Admiral Jones.

"We talk to each other, share information and together we are stopping the attacks."

"This is the first naval operation under the EU banner but it is also the most significant gathering of world navies for a common aim I

can think of. Added together, it's pretty historical."

Despite this massing of maritime force, the task facing EUNAVFOR, CTF 151 or the independent nations is daunting.

The pirates' realm is vast – from the Egyptian-Eritrean border to the Tanzanian-Mozambique frontier (nearly 3,000 miles or roughly the same sailing distance as Portsmouth to Crete). East it stretches to the Omani coast and northern tip of Madagascar.

In all, the piracy danger area covers 1.1 million square miles of ocean – more than 11 times the size of the UK.

All those involved in curbing the bandits' actions agree. However many ships they have at present, there are not enough to guarantee safety for all merchantmen.

"It looks like an enormous number of warships on paper. You have to recognise that you are dealing with a huge area – it takes three or four days to sail from the Gulf of Aden to Mombasa – and our ships can only cover a small part of it," Rear Admiral Jones explained.

"Nor do we have enough ships to run convoys. There are simply hundreds of merchant vessels in the Gulf of Aden."

"What we can do is encourage ships to group together, advise them to travel at night and give them as much information as we can."

Merchant firms log on to a special website – www.mschoa.eu – provide details of their vessels, such as speed, cargo, freeboard, receive information and advice from the force's HQ in Northwood.

And merchantmen have also responded to the piracy threat, from posting lookouts to creating 'citadels' inside their ships where they can 'lock down' in the event of an attack and the marauders cannot get at them.

But there is still a lot to be done – resolving extremely complex legal issues so captured pirates can be prosecuted for a start – and, above all, restoring order and peace to Somalia.

"We are attacking the symptoms, not the cause. More work has to be done, but importantly countries are waking up to the challenge," said Rear Admiral Jones.

They might wish to start with the small town of Eyl, 500 miles up the coast from Mogadishu, a latter-day Port Royal, a town where piracy has become a business, a town where the pirates anchor their captive ships – ten vessels with their cargoes (and 179 crew) at the end of January – and even have restaurants set up ashore to provide meals for the hostage sailors.

"One of the challenges is that pirates are seen as glamorous. People are growing up wanting to be pirates. They like the lifestyle," explains Cdr Alistair Worsley on the Atalanta staff.

And what's not to like? They drive around Somalia in their 4x4s, have the pick of wives from local clans, are feared and respected in equal measure.

What else do we know about our foe?

"We know their tactics, their weapons, their vessels, their motivation – it's financial, there's no wider motive," said Rear Admiral Jones.

We also know that dawn is their hour. They prefer to strike at first light. They like vessels with little freeboard (easier to board).

They don't like the presence of warships. They don't like maritime patrol aircraft (based at Djibouti). They don't like helicopters (based aboard the various warships).

They don't like bad weather either, not least because most of their attacks are carried out in small skiffs, operating from 'mother ships' – normally dhows – hundreds of miles from land.

The winter weather has curbed the number of attacks but so too has the substantial military presence.

"You are far more likely to see a warship or helicopter in these waters than you were a couple of months ago," Rear Admiral Jones emphasised.

And what is clear is that those involved in the mission need no motivation – ship's companies see the vessels they are helping on a daily basis and the merchant sailors have voiced their thanks.

"So we are making a difference. We are making these waters safer for merchant shipping – and that's a good feeling."

"We are making a difference. We are making these waters safer for merchant shipping – and that's a good feeling."

– Rear Admiral Phil Jones



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Portland boosts

IT IS not just aid ships which require a naval escort in troubled waters.

Some of Britain's most valued nautical assets also receive the protective umbrella of a Royal Navy warship.

All £300m of the P&O liner Arcadia was guided through waters off the Horn of Africa by HMS Portland, the most high-profile of the anti-piracy missions.

The 87,000-ton cruise ship, with more than 2,000 passengers aboard, was making for India – and there's no-way of reaching the sub-continent without running the gauntlet of 'pirate alley' (unless you wish to make the lengthy detour around the southern tip of Africa).

The frigate provided a reassuring sight for Arcadia's passengers – as did the warship's Lynx which was out and about scouring the oceans for illegal activities.

As a mark of respect, the liner dipped her ensign to Portland – and the frigate responded in kind – before Arcadia's master sent a message of gratitude to the warship for being on hand in these troubled waters.

"It's a pleasure to be able to demonstrate to passengers and crew of the Royal Navy's commitment to keeping the sea lanes open," said Cdr Tim Henry, Portland's CO.

That commitment has seen his ship attached to a new maritime group, Combined Task Force 151.

CTF 151 was set up at the beginning of January. Although comprising just three vessels initially – flagship USS San Antonio, USS Mahan, plus Portland – 20 nations have voiced

their willingness to support the anti-piracy force which works alongside the similar EU task group.

Portland has been working particularly closely with Arleigh-Burke destroyer USS Mahan – including boarding, searching and securing the American warship.

The frigate's commando boarding team rapid roped from the 815 NAS Lynx on to the Mahan – one part of a two-pronged assault on the destroyer; prong two came courtesy of the rest of the boarding party arriving by sea boat, eventually securing the Mahan's bridge.

"Working with the Mahan's well-trained team is a huge bonus," said Lt Francis Griffiths, Portland's boarding officer.



www.navynews.co.uk



● Send a gunboat... (Above) Northumberland's sea boats head for the MV Victoria to escort her into Bosaso (centre) while seamen specialists stand watch on the upper deck (above right)

(Iron)men of valour

TWO and a half million people were able to eat for a month thanks to the efforts of HMS Northumberland, guardian of ships delivering aid to Somalia.

Six vessels have been safely shepherded into port in the turmoil-stricken African state as the frigate resurrected an old Royal Navy skill – convoy duty.

Northumberland has been charged with fending off pirates and safeguarding ships of the UN World Food Programme in the first naval operation run by the European Union, Operation Atalanta.

After the successful escort of the (very sluggish) MV Semlow just before Christmas, the warship picked up the (slightly less sluggish) MV Jaikur II to accompany the aid ship into Mogadishu. The 500-mile escort duty took four days, but the Jaikur II arrived safely.

True convoy duties began in late January when the frigate received orders to escort four merchantmen – MVs Sea King, Victoria, Ryong Gang II and Kwan Mo Bang – up the east African coast from Mombasa.

Sea King left the convoy in the Somali capital Mogadishu. The remaining three steamers were guided around the Horn of Africa – and into the 'lion's den' of pirate activity – to Bosaso and Berbera on Somalia's northern shores.

Northumberland went to action stations approaching both ports, sending her Royal Marines boarding teams from the Fleet Protection Group RM and sea boats out to protect the merchant vessels before they were met by UN and Somali security forces.

The mission lasted ten days, but by its end Northumberland had ensured that almost 44,000 tonnes of food had been delivered to UN agencies for distribution in Somalia.

Two out of five Somalis rely on hand-outs to survive; the deliveries from the six vessels protected by the British warship is enough to feed 2,550,000 people for one month.

"I am pleased to say that, like our previous escort missions, this one was successful – and without incident," said Cdr Martin Simpson, Northumberland's CO.

"We remain committed to our humanitarian and security mission and the benefit it brings to the people of Somalia in their time of need."

Good deeds aboard Northumberland are not restricted to convoy duties.

The Kenyan port of Mombasa has become a second home to the frigate during her six-month deployment.

And in that second home, the Tumaini Children's Home has become dear to the hearts of the ship's company. It received a visit from 40 Northumbrians – led by AB 'Tiff' Ridge – over three days. The more DIY-minded sailors fixed taps and toilets, painted, plumbed, laid new drains, tiled walls and painted some more. The less-skilled at fix-it jobs spent their time playing with the youngsters.

The home provides care for the under fives who are either infected with HIV or have been left orphaned by the disease.

The plight of these children prompted the ship's company to organise an ironman contest (the logo is pictured below, if you were wondering) – a quarter marathon, 13½ mile bike ride, the same distance on a rowing machine, then another quarter marathon on the running track.

It began at dawn when the temperature was 'only' 24°C (75°F). It ended around mid-day, by which time it was around 35°C (95°F) with most of the ship's company cheering on the 11 athletes.

The final quarter marathon was not a lot of fun, said Cdr Simpson (one of the 11 competitors).

"It ended up being a sort of walk-waddle with water almost constantly. Still, 18 laps later, we finished with a flourish and it was over, legs like jelly, body craving water and sugar, but we felt great. A real achievement," he added.

Some of those who didn't take part in the ironman took to the field for a game of Rugby 7s against a local side – "who all seemed to be about 6ft 10, built like brick outhouses and Olympic sprinters to boot," Northumberland's CO observed. Add to that a pitch which possessed all the bounce of concrete and you have the makings of a hefty defeat.

We'd like to tell you the ship's footballers fared better (on a pitch no less forgiving) in temperatures close to 40°C (104°F) in the shade... had there been any shade, that is. But we'd be lying.

Good job there was a barbecue, beer and a good old singalong with the Mombasa rugby team to bring the day to a close, by which time around £5,000 had been raised for the children's home.

"I know that the memories and the enormous spirit of the children, staff and Kenyans will stay with us forever. It really has been an honour for us to help," said Cdr Simpson.

Of course, good deeds do not always require money.

Sunday, May 14 1989, was one of the darker days in the modern history of Naval aviation.

All nine crew and passengers were killed when HMS Brilliant's Lynx crashed in the Kenyan bush outside Mombasa.

Two decades later HMS Northumberland's sailors returned to Kenya to pay their respects both to the tragic nine and others who have given their lives in defence of freedom on and off the shores of east Africa.

A memorial to the Lynx dead was originally erected on the site of the crash, but with the land up for sale and the monument possibly at risk of vandalism, it has been moved to the chapel at the Mission to Seamen in Mombasa.

The mission's padre was presented with two replacement White Ensigns to hang beside the memorial.

"While the victims of the crash were from all branches of the Service, the loss of a helicopter and its crew is always particularly mourned," said Northumberland's flight commander Lt Stuart Bainbridge.

"I am grateful for this opportunity to pay my respects to fellow pilots who so tragically lost their lives."

Relatively close by is the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery where the Northumberland sailors could be found in an act of remembrance for 99 men from all three Services.

"It was pleasing to see that the cemetery was well-maintained and, despite the heat, some time was taken by crew to wander among the graves in quiet contemplation," said Lt Cdr Rob Kitt, the frigate's weapon engineer officer.

"Many of the sailors were surprised at the number of trades – some long gone now – which were represented, from blacksmiths to NAAFI canteens."

And sometimes, you just need to let your hair down. In place of the traditional flight deck movie, enter the flight deck *Guitar Hero* 'rock-off' – basically air guitar, minus the air, but with a computer guitar... Competitors wield a mock-up 'axe' (to use the correct rock terminology...) which records how many 'notes' the player hits.

"It involves absolutely no talent or knowledge of guitar playing whatsoever," explained Northumberland's CO.

It does, however, demand a lot of theatrics, headbanging (*child of the 80s – Ed*) and practice. Few practised more than XO Lt Cdr Tristram Kirkwood apparently; he bought the game in Dubai and clocked up plenty of hours in the 'studio'... only to end up fifth.



new anti-piracy force

"Every boarding is different and understanding each other's capabilities helps us to improve our own skills."

While the Brits were clambering around the Mahan, the Americans were clambering around Portland determined to 'secure' her.

Lt Griffiths' US counterpart, Ensign Ian Townsend, agrees that sharing techniques will help the task force in the long run.

"Training with Portland's outstanding team of professionals was a valuable experience," he added.

You don't have to be an American armed to the teeth to get on board HMS Portland.

Rear Admiral Terry McKnight, CTF 151's Commanding Officer, toured the frigate and chatted to the Brits at the front end of the war on piracy – notably the ops room team, boarding party and ship's flight.

All received the admiral's thanks

for their "superb contribution and support".

It is the senior American officer's aim to "make it unpleasant to be in the pirate business". But like Rear Admiral Jones, he concedes that "there are just not enough Navy ships out there to cover 1.1 million square miles."

Three ships, is of course, better than none. And the intention is there. And the force will grow.

"A coalition of nations has come together off the coast of Somalia to begin a process which will, over time, see these seas return to being a safe and secure thoroughfare for global trade," said Cdr Henry emphatically.

And while Northumberland simply play at being rock gods, Portland go 'one louder' (in true *Spinal Tap* fashion...).

Enter LET 'Blakey' Blackburn (lead guitar), LS 'Stavros' Farrell (rhythm guitar), Mne 'Coops' Cooper (bass), AB 'Sherlock' Holmes (vocals), Logs 'Scouse' Thorogood (keyboard) and Lt 'Flatcap' Rogers (drums; he wears a flatcap on stage...) – known collectively as

Not Under Command (the musicians had ditched the proposed names Portland Rocks – too cheesy – and Portland Stones – too heavy).

Little more than a month ago Not Under Command didn't exist. A trip to a reasonably-priced music shop in Abu Dhabi with

"It's pleasure to be able to demonstrate the Royal Navy's commitment to keeping the sea lanes open."
– Cdr Tim Henry



● Portland's flight deck officer pauses to enjoy sunset over the Horn of Africa during night flying exercises

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, FRPU East

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The versatile Viking

FOR much of the past decade, HMS Ocean was often seen to be the busiest ship in the surface fleet.

Wherever there was conflict, unrest, tension, Ocean could be found.

The same could be said today of the versatile Bay class which are being used for much more than their original role of supporting amphibious landings.

The leading ship of the class, RFA Largs Bay, epitomises their all-purpose nature.

She has done what she was intended to do: put troops ashore during exercises in the UK – South-west Scimitar in the spring of 2007 – and most recently in the Falklands (see pages 25-27).

And she has done what she wasn't necessarily designed to do: (successfully) catch drugs-runners in the Caribbean.

After a seven-month deployment there over the winter and spring of 2007-08 and a spell in UK waters, including Queen's Colours, Meet Your Navy (the new-look Navy Days) in Portsmouth and a visit to Leith, the ship left home last autumn to cross the Pond once more.

Crewed by 76 RFA sailors, bolstered by 17 fliers and engineers of 219 Flight, 815 NAS, the ship was intent upon stopping the drug barons once more.

Instead, after a brief visit to the USA, she found herself in the South Atlantic where a ten-week stint is drawing to a close.

After visiting South Georgia, the ship is spending a few more weeks around the Falklands before HMS Manchester arrives.

That will allow her return to her original stomping ground for



● RFA Largs Bay docked down off West Falkland during Exercise Cape Bayonet while an RAF Sea King conducts a rescue of Fred, the ship's accident-prone dummy

a spell of anti-drugs patrol before she undergoes some maintenance in the USA.

The trip to the South Atlantic allowed the ship to make use of her amphibious features – her cavernous loading dock which can hold up to 32 Challenger 2 tanks, landing craft and Mexeflote powered rafts.

The ship stores enough food to feed one person for 15,000 days... or all the ship's company for more than half a year.

All four Bays are powered by

three thrusters – two at the stern which rotate 360° and one in the bow – which not only drive the ship through the water but also serve as the 'rudder'.

The two stern thrusters drive the ship through the ocean at speeds up to 18kts; if one goes down, Largs can still make 12kts.

They can also be used to maintain Largs' position at anchor in strong currents or strong winds – using a series of monitors and sensors, computers adjust the direction and power of the

thrusters.

It's not the only piece of wizardry to impress. A computer system monitors the ship's doors and hatches and sets off alarms depending on the sea state – or nuclear, chemical and biological warfare threat – if any is opened inadvertently, taking into account the 30 or so seconds it takes to open and close a door.

As for Largs specifically, she's affiliated with the town of the same name in Ayrshire.

And thanks to that affiliation

the auxiliary has adopted one of Largs' more colourful characters as her mascot.

Vik the Viking, a diminutive bearded Scandinavian with a golden helmet and a sharp sword – he's actually the logo for the anti-litter campaign in the Scottish town – travels wherever his shipmates go.

Largs Bay is the first military vessel to carry the name (although there was an HMS Largo Bay, a frigate which served between 1944 and 1958).



Class: Bay-class Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary)
Pennant Number: L3006
Builder: Swan Hunter, Wallsend
Laid down: October 1 2001
Launched: July 18 2003
Commissioned: December 17 2006
Mascot: Vik the Viking
Displacement: 16,160 tonnes
Length: 176 metres (577ft)
Beam: 26.4 metres (32.2 metres with Mexeflotes) (86ft and 105ft respectively)
Draught: 5.8 metres (19ft)
Speed: 18 knots (max)
Complement: 76 (plus 17 embarked flight)
Military lift: 356 troops (can be increased to 500), 1,200 linear metres of vehicle/equipment space for up to 32 Challenger 2 tanks or 150 small trucks
Landing craft: Two LCUV or one LCU Mk10
Mexeflotes: Two – transported fixed to hull sides
Vehicle deck: 1,200 linear metres
Helicopters: Flight deck can host helicopters up to Chinook-size; Temporary Air Storage shelter serves as hangar.
Propulsion: Diesel electric propulsion with bow thruster and azimuth thrusters
Armament: 2 x Miniguns, 6 x GPMG

The town, however, has had a ship named in its honour.

HMS Largs, a former banana boat, was used in almost every major amphibious operation in WW2 as a headquarters and command vessel, including North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, Normandy and southern France.

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.59

PO Henry Ernest Wild, AM

THE deeds of Ernest Shackleton, the fate of his ship Endurance, are the stuff of Antarctic legend.

Marooned on the ice, Shackleton set out to raise the alarm and save his comrades, every one of them. Which he did.

Each year Royal Marines recreate his incredible trek across South Georgia to reach safety, which remains no less forbidding a century later.

Yet the plight of the Irish polar explorer and his 27 comrades on the frozen continent was not unique between 1914 and 1916.

Shackleton left the UK leading the grandly-titled Imperial Trans-Antarctica Expedition.

And as the name suggests, the explorer and his party set out to do what no one had done before: cross the Antarctic land mass from the Weddell Sea on the South American side to the Ross Sea in the southern Pacific.

There was no way Shackleton could haul all his supplies over 1,800 miles of snow and ice. They would run out 400 miles short of their destination, at the foot of the Beardmore Glacier.

And so a support team was dispatched to the Ross Sea to build a series of supply depots from Cape Evans to the glacier.

On an ill-fated expedition, the fate of the 'Ross Sea party', as the ten men became known, was the illest.

It began badly – their ship Aurora arrived late – and never recovered.

Most of the party were Antarctic novices. There were disagreements with the expedition leader, Aeneas Mackintosh, a Merchant Navy officer. The motor tractors which had been landed proved an utter failure.

Nevertheless, in two months, the Ross Sea party succeeded in establishing a series of depots – inadequately provisioned admittedly – from the Pacific to the Beardmore Glacier.

The cost was high. Ten dogs had been lost. Confidence in Mackintosh's leadership was low. And PO Ernest Wild had been forced to surrender part of one toe and even the top of an ear to frostbite.

Adventure was in the Wild blood; Ernest's brother Frank made five trips to the ice on various expeditions (including the ill-starred Trans-Antarctica attempt).

Ernest Wild, however, was a career sailor, more than two decades in the Senior Service. He volunteered for the Ross Sea party as a 'general assistant'. It would be his first and only trip to Antarctica.

As the shore party recovered from their depot-

laying exertions and prepared for the austral winter, autumn gales tore along the coast, ripping Aurora from her moorings.

Fastened to an ice floe, the ship was carried away. It would be nine months before Aurora broke free of the ice and another two after that – April 1916 – before she reached New Zealand.

The shore party found themselves stranded on the ice; most of their supplies were still aboard the Aurora.

Nevertheless, with great ingenuity, the men set about improvising supplies, making use of the detritus of previous expeditions to the Ross Sea. (Ernest Wild even made a form of tobacco made from tea, coffee, sawdust and dried herbs.)

And despite being stranded, the party never thought of abandoning their original mission – to build the supply depots, unaware that Shackleton too was trapped.

The second season of depot building was even more arduous than the first.

Dissent, the weather, frostbite, scurvy, snow blindness all conspired against the explorers.

Rev Arnold Spencer-Smith, the expedition's chaplain and photographer, was the first to succumb. Exhausted, he had to be hauled by his comrades on a sled.

The expedition leader was next. He joined the chaplain on the sled, hauled by Ernest Wild and former PO Ernest Joyce.

Spencer-Smith died just 19 miles from safety. Macintosh was more fortunate, reaching camp at Hut Point thanks to the efforts of Wild and Joyce.

The two men had hauled their leader 100 miles; they had carried the reverend 350 miles, dragging him for 42 days. In all the party had spent 162 days away from camp, trudging across 950 miles of Antarctic wasteland.

Mackintosh subsequently died in a bid to reach Cape Evans – against the advice of his comrades – while Wild, Joyce and a third explorer waited two more months to successfully make the attempt.

They were rescued by Shackleton the following January, 1917. Only then did they learn that their leader had never made his cross-Antarctic journey – and all the depot laying had been in vain.

It would be more than six years before Ernest Wild was gazetted for his 'gallant conduct' on the ice... by which time he was dead.

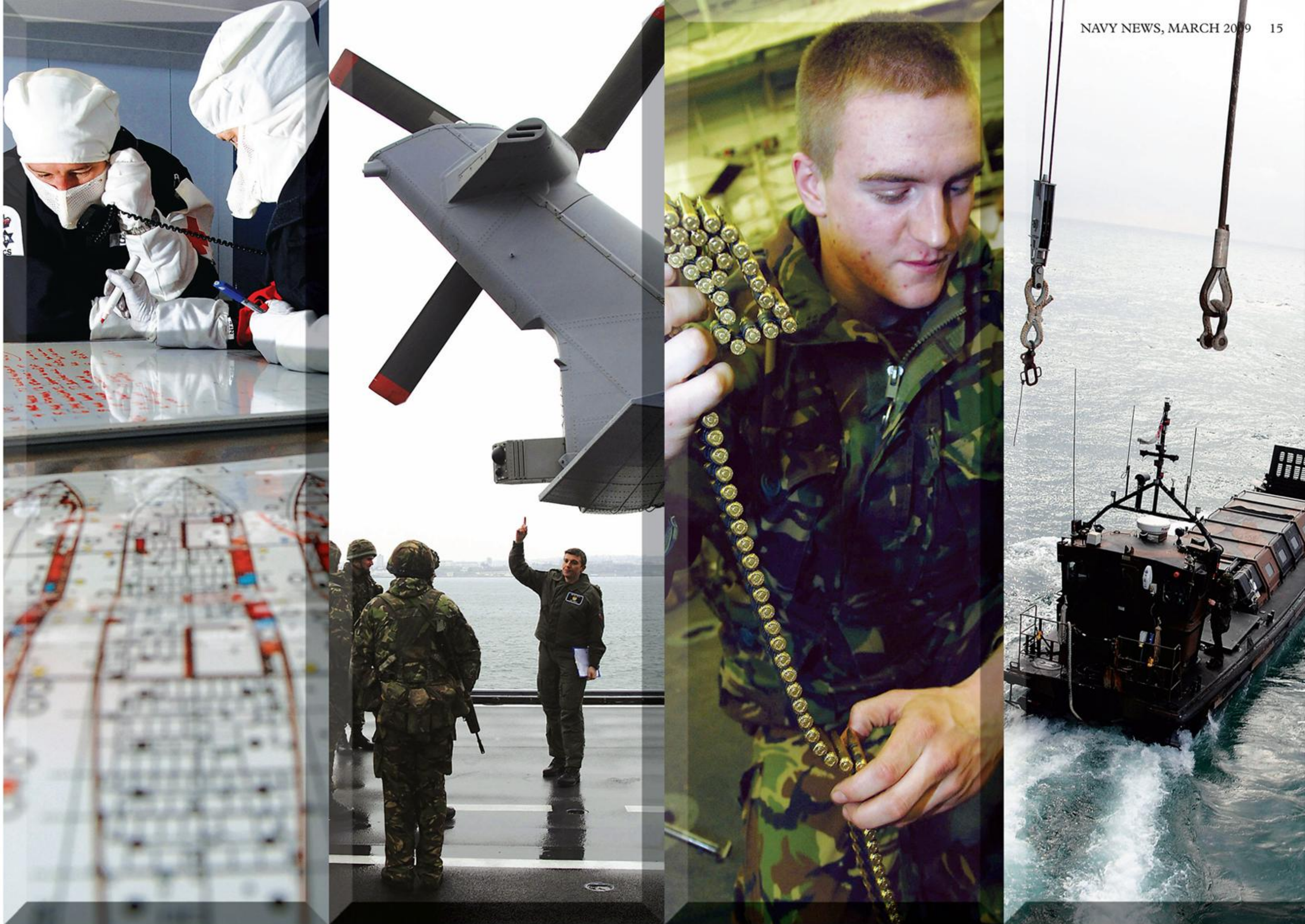
He fell victim to typhoid while serving with HMS Biarritz in the Mediterranean in March 1918 and died in hospital in Malta.

photographic memories

THIS month's image from the photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum depicts the end of an era – and a sight familiar to some of our older readers. Junior Seaman Alan Ferguson becomes the last 'Button Boy' to make the salute from the top of the mast at HMS Ganges. The image was taken during a parents' day display witnessed by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh on June 6 1973. The previous year the school leaving age had been raised to 16 and the boy's training establishment became a general training facility. (Neg HU 87137)

■ THIS photograph – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, emailing photos@iwm.org.uk or phoning 0207 416 5333.





Sharpening the sword

ONE of the largest amphibious deployments in recent years has set off with 12 ships and other units heading out to the Far East.

Taurus 09 has a Task Force that boasts 12 ships, including a US destroyer and a French frigate, two submarines, green berets from 40 Commando, 539 ASRM, helicopters from 820 NAS, 857 NAS and the Commando Helicopter Force, and even Chinooks from the RAF's 18 Squadron.

This massive force of sailors, marines, airmen, divers will be bolstered by other troops, aircraft and ships along the path of its 20,400-mile journey to the east and home again.

The deployment is split into two main phases, with the first seeing the British forces joining other nations in the Mediterranean to run amphibious landings in Turkey as part of Exercise Egemen; phase two involves a further training package in the jungles of Brunei.

However before setting off to a foreign shore sailors, airmen and marines enjoyed a chilly training package on the beaches of Cornwall.

Exercise South-West Sword saw air assault ship HMS Ocean

being put through her paces by those demanding folk of FOST.

Royal Marines of 40 Commando took up the mantle of embarked military force – as they are now doing for Taurus – proving their amphibious landing skills by means of landing craft or helicopter.

The air group for the training pulled together the powerful assets of ASaC Sea Kings from 857 NAS, jungle Sea Kings from 845, Merlins from 820 and Lynx from 815.

While the beach suffered the heavy tramp of bootneck boots, on board ship the marines joined sailors to assist them in fending off the FOSTies' demands in firefighting, medical emergency and damage control exercises.

The Commanding Officer of 40 Commando, Lt Col Paul James, said: "After tours in Afghanistan and Iraq in recent years, being involved in amphibious exercises like this is excellent for Royal Marines because it takes us back to our roots and is what we do best."

Obviously all the hard work on board paid off for the men and women of HMS Ocean, who were told by Rear Adm Richard Ibbotson, the Flag Officer Sea Training himself, that they should

be immensely proud of their achievement over the previous eight weeks.

He told the assembled company that without exception everyone on board had raised their game and embraced the challenge, getting their ship ready to sail for amphibious operations anywhere in the world.

HMS Ocean's Commanding Officer Capt Simon Kings said: "Six months ago my ship looked like a building site. We are now ready for operations worldwide."

"The ship's company has really dug out and delivered a performance I am extremely proud of."

"We look forward to whatever the next six months may bring the Mighty O."

As the ships readied for their departure, on board flagship HMS Bulwark CINC Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope said: "I consider the Royal Navy to be one of the premier navies in the world, and this sort of operation puts us in the premier league."

"We can deliver a command and control force at length and sustain that force for whatever period of time."

● Top: Logs(CS) man a first aid post on board HMS Ocean during OST; a safety brief for the Royal Marines of 40 Cdo on the Merlin; a marine from Alpha Company readies to board a landing craft; and a LCVP of 9ASRM sets off for shore
Pictures: LA(Phot) A-J Macleod

● Two LCVPs and a workboat at a mexeflote off Ocean's hull
Picture: LA(Phot) Bernie Henesey



A TALEBAN leader killed, two major weapons hauls seized, a headquarters' compound captured, a bomb factory smashed, four drug factories wiped out.

Royal Marines delivered telling blows to insurgents across southern Afghanistan, seizing the impetus in the struggle to bring peace and stability to Kandahar and Helmand.

With the winter sun slowly rising over the Upper Sangin valley, 120 men of X-Ray and Yankee Companies, 45 Commando, and 30 Afghan troops lay in wait on the banks of the Helmand River.

All through the night the men had slogged over rugged farm land, dissected by irrigation ditches and canals.

Now, at dawn, they were poised to unleash Operation Ghartse Palang – Lion – against Taleban strongholds around Mazak, a mile or so outside the Royals' forward base, Inkerman.

With first light they pushed into the sprawling series of interlocking compounds, guided by the Afghan soldiers whose knowledge of the land and the people proved vital.

"Unless we're confident that the enemy are inside, then our entry is always a 'soft knock'," explained Sgt David 'Tommo' Thompson, 8 Troop, Yankee Company. "Minimal force, maximum care."

"Before entering any compound, we are always aware of the threat of booby traps. This undoubtedly puts a lot of stress on younger lads, but for the members of the troop – some straight from training, aged as young as 18 – this is part of daily routine that has to become the norm."

Searching compounds does not merely require cool heads and brave hearts. It also demands man's best friend – specialist dogs (plus handlers) were fundamental to Operation Lion – and metal detectors.

The deeper the troops moved through the complex, the more the search teams began to unearth: rocket-propelled grenades, explosive charges, bombs, shells, fuses, rifles, pistols.

With an ever-growing haul – and more and more of the compound – falling into Allied hands, the enemy belatedly woke up and began to offer organised resistance.

As the Taleban massed for an assault on the commandos, 8 Troop took up position on the northern flank of the compound – and waited.

When the enemy swarmed forward, hurling grenades, spraying the terrain with bursts of machine-gun fire and brandishing their AK47s, the barrels of 29 Commando Regiment RA's 105mm cannon barked, the mortars roared, the grenades rained down and the machine-guns chattered. The wall of fire brought the enemy onslaught to a halt.

While 8 Troop parried the enemy counter-attack, their comrades continued the trawl through the compound.

They left the best till last: a bomb factory with two explosives ready to set and others filled



T

with metal shrapnel being prepared. The bombs will harm no-one now. They were destroyed by the Royals.

The destruction of the substantial cache was the last act of Lion, an operation which received praise from commando leaders in Afghanistan.

"Yankee Company executed this dangerous operation with cunning, determination and bravery," said 45's CO Lt Col Jim Morris.

"It was a great success with a significant haul of weapons, ammunition and explosives removed from Taleban hands. Sangin is more stable as a result."

3 Commando Brigade CO Brig Gordon Messenger added: "The successes of Operation Lion are not unusual. Day in, day out, our troops are on the ground, working with the local population, focused on getting inside the enemy's mind, disrupting him where he least expects it and denying him the freedom of movement that he seeks."

The scale of Lion was eclipsed by a five-day offensive unleashed early in February, Operation Diesel – one of the largest aviation-led assaults by commandos since they struck at the Al Faw peninsula in Iraq one March morning in 2003.

More than 700 men were committed to Diesel – 42 and 45 Commandos, the Brigade Reconnaissance Force, plus the armoured infantry of 1 Battalion Princess of Wales Royal Regiment.

They struck at Sapwan Qualeh in the Upper Sangin Valley with the expressed aim of striking at the Taleban's drug trade.

Just after midnight on February 7, RAF Chinooks, RN Sea Kings and Lynx and US CH53 Sea Stallions delivered more than 500 green berets to three innocuous-sounding landing sites – Oak, Willow and Cherry – all within 800 metres of the enemy.

'Lightning' Lima Company, 42 Commando, scored the first major success: two drug dens in a chain of compounds.

The Royals uncovered vats, presses and bags, plus 60kg of wet opium waiting to be processed. It never will be.

Thanks to a series of feints, the Royals could hear the chatter of Taleban fire attacking phantom Allied forces.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Lima's Sgt Tony Dryden.

"The Taleban were confused and completely overmatched by our tactics.

They were on the back foot and unable to cope throughout."

The next success fell to X-Ray: 400kg of raw opium and a massive cache of chemicals used to make heroin.

For most of the morning, Yankee Company had been biding their time in reserve. They did not disappoint.

But to reach their objective, Yankee had to subdue enemy forces.

"We were 200 metres away from the first compounds and had just climbed on to high ground when an RPG buzzed over our heads, fired by a guy who just came out of an alleyway," said Capt Olly Osborne, 9 Troop Fire Support Group, Yankee Company.

Sniper fire, heavy and light machine-guns, SA80s and the 30mm cannon of an Apache gunship were all brought to bear on the insurgents who fled or lay dead on the field of battle.

To the victor, the spoils: a multi-million pound drugs factory which stunned the commandos.

"We found ten or 15 barrels of wet opium cooking – the most I've ever seen. I've not seen it on this scale before," said a breathless Mne Jake McEndoo, Yankee Company.

"The operation was exciting and definitely one to remember."

Lt Col Morris certainly thinks so. The drugs destroyed would have been worth more than £50m once processed and shipped out of Afghanistan.

"The disruption of the enemy and his infrastructure in this action will contribute directly to the gradually-improving security situation in the Upper Sangin Valley."

"As ever, it was the bravery, determination and skill of the men and women on the ground that delivered this success. I am immensely proud of them all."

Meanwhile in the hills above Kajaki...

THE Upper Sangin valley is not 45's outermost frontier. That dubious distinction belongs to Forward Operating Base Zeebrugge, 4,000ft above the Helmand River, watching over the Kajaki hydro-electric dam.

"Defence of the hydro-electric station is a task of strategic importance," stressed 45's CO Lt Col Morris.

"The power it produces is vital for sustaining the livelihoods of the Afghan people in Helmand and Kandahar."

It is home to Victory Company,

specialists in high-altitude, winter warfare. It is an unforgiving place.

"With limited resupply and basic living conditions, Kajaki looks like the final frontier," said 45's Lt Simon Williamson RN.

It is not the final frontier. For there is land beyond Zeebrugge, land in part dominated by the Taleban who have driven most of the local populace away and who had built a command complex to the north of the dam.

We use the pluperfect tense deliberately. The insurgents had a headquarters near Kajaki. Today they have neither headquarters nor head thanks to a stealthy strike by Victor.

The company crept out of Zeebrugge under cover of darkness one night, a bitter wind striking their faces. They jinked, crawled and snuck through the Kajaki terrain with night as their blanket, taking up positions in the Taleban's 'backyard' – undetected – before dawn.

With the first rays of light came the first thunder of the guns – machine-guns, mortars, artillery, air strikes – which kept the foe pinned down in his trenches.

And then the killer blow. Two precision bombs smack bang on the command bunkers.

When the dust settled and the commandos moved in they found among the dead a Taleban leader.

"This is a significant blow to the Taleban which will disrupt their ability to co-ordinate future attacks in Kajaki," said Victor's operations officer Capt Paul Forrest.

"It should also send a powerful message to them that their roadside bombs and threats against the local populace will not be tolerated."

And at Kandahar...

A THREE-day swoop by a combined RM-Canadian-US-Afghan battlegroup caught Taleban forces off guard and led to a substantial haul of weapons falling into Allied hands.

Commandos of Lima Company, 42 Commando, led British participation in Operation Shahi Tandar (Royal Storm) alongside 3rd Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment, the Afghan National Army and 2-2 Infantry US Army.

Lima led the assault, 'Chinooked' to the edge of a series of Taleban compounds in the district of Zhari Panjwayi.

The helicopter assault – and the Royals' rapid regrouping once disembarked from the Chinooks – caught the enemy

off guard.

The fundamentalists offered limited resistance as the troops swept systematically through the series of farm buildings and compounds.

By the time the three-day search was complete, detonators for makeshift bombs, anti-personnel mines, sacks of home-made explosives, rocket-propelled grenades, AK47s and ammunition had been seized.

"This was a deliberately bold operation," stressed Maj Neil Willson, 42 Cdo's Chief-of-Staff.

"We dictate the pace of operations in this area – and the insurgents know this. They are constantly behind the game as we emerge from the Afghan winter."

"As ever, the Marines conducted themselves with clinical restraint, respecting the local civilian populace's pattern of life. This success is entirely down to their professionalism. Another significant success for the 'smiley boys' of 42 Commando."

But in Lashkar Gah...

NO BOMBS, no machine-guns, no explosions, just Burns in the hub of British operations in Helmand.

The Royals could not let the 250th anniversary of the birth of Scotland's favourite son pass without a traditional supper.

Most Scots in the Corps, understandably, serve with Arbroath-based 45 Commando. But not all. And Royal will seize any excuse to have a knees up, irrespective of his nationality.

As it was there were 50 Servicemen and women sitting down for a Burns Night dinner of haggis, neeps (turnips), tatties (potatoes) and all the trimmings (but no whisky) at Task Force Helmand HQ in Camp Bastion.

Dinner was served with the lines of Burns' *Address to a Haggis* echoing around the mess – the first of many recitals of the poet's work on the evening (accompanied by some dubious Scottish accents).

Diners decided (bizarrely) that Dane Maj Filip Nielsen of the 1st Jutland Dragoons Regiment gave the finest example of a Scottish brogue on the night.

Accent, of course, was not as important as the message – a message which organiser C/Sgt Dougie Lamont, from Dumfries and Galloway, believes remains relevant in the more than 200 years after Burns' death.

"When you think of Burns, I narrow it down to one word: passion. Passion for all he did in life," he explained.

"He has been described as a poet of the poor, an advocate for political and social change, an opponent of slavery, pomposity and greed – all causes very much supported by UN resolutions, the reasons why we are in Afghanistan today."

Ah yes, the reason why. Tennyson's immortal phrase.

The men on the ground know 'the reason why'. They are in no doubt that their efforts are making a difference – and that the Taleban pose a clear and present danger.

But they're not convinced Britons back home understand, as one young green beret pointed out to CINC Fleet, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, when he visited Afghanistan last month.

"You hear all about Gaza at the moment – why don't the public want to know about Afghanistan?" the marine protested. "That's our war."

It is. And there is a direct link between what happens in the poppy fields and labyrinthine complexes of Helmand and the streets of the UK.

"There is a very clear connection, fostering terrorists in Afghanistan, feeding terrorists in the UK," said Admiral Stanhope.

"We are a force for our good – UK plc's good. It's all about dealing with issues at range rather than on our streets."

"The British public are very much alongside our troops, it's just that they don't understand what they're doing. We try to get the message across better, try to expose the incredible deeds they are doing."

The admiral is one of two RN VIPs to drop in on Senior Servicemen and women this month (Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Alan Massey was the other). To CINC Fleet, it's not just important that the Navy's leaders are seen on the front-line but crucial to the critical decisions they must make.

"You cannot get a feel to make some of the decisions you have to make unless you know what is going on here," he stressed.

"You can read all you like and get briefed to death, but it's only by being here that you see what's being delivered, how it's being delivered, see the conditions and see the issues, then you can go home and do something about it."

With thanks to Ian Carr, *Focus Magazine*



This is our war

The burden of the desert of the sea



I DON'T know if I am the most isolated British serviceman at the moment, but I am the most isolated sailor – according to PJHQ in Northwood – on operations.

I am currently serving with EUFOR as operations officer and sole UK member of the main force headquarters at Abéché in eastern Chad (check it on Google Earth!) on the border with the Darfur region of Sudan.

Our area of operations is well over half the size of France and I am responsible for all operations for the force which comprises around 3,400 troops from 19 EU member states, plus an Albanian company, and we have recently been joined by a Russian helicopter detachment too, so this really is multi-national.

We have a United Nations mandate to provide a safe and secure environment for refugees from Darfur and for the local population. I have been out on patrol with the three multi-national battalions here (Polish/Croatian, French/Slovenian and Irish/Dutch) and it has been an amazing experience which I have to say is unlike anything that I've done before.

There are many local security issues including tribal inter-ethnic fighting, nomadic herders and sedentary farmers, large amounts of banditry, and rebel incursions among others.

This mix of overlapping and interwoven issues has made our job a difficult one and I have been to villages that were completely burned-out and only women could be seen. These attacks were timed to coincide with the once a year harvest grain being stored in the grain huts and that was all burned too.

This is just one example of the problems facing the people in this area.

There are around half a million people in refugee and 'internally displaced person' camps and we have to try to maintain a secure environment to enable

We'll get the obvious out of the way first. Who's the only skier you'll find in the desert? Why, **Cdr Martyn Skeer**, of course (Groan – Ed). The naval officer (pictured, right – he's the one without the big gun) is the sole British sailor, nay, the sole British military figure, coping with tribal warfare, a refugee crisis, the spread of the Sahara, with a European Union peacekeeping force in eastern Chad. This is his account of a unique mission.



non-governmental organisations to be able to operate with a high degree of safety.

As well as the security issues above, there are rebels on both sides of the border, desertification of the north of the region as the Sahara extends southwards and you get some idea of the conditions experienced by many thousands of people in this region which borders Darfur and is suffering from some of the same issues. In fact, we are trying in some respects to prevent the 'Darfurisation' of eastern Chad.

Indeed, the environment here is extremely harsh with temperatures in the 40s (it gets even hotter inside the tent sometimes) and a clear break between a rainy season – extremely hot with very high humidity and monumental downpours, and a dry season – extremely hot with very low humidity and some big sandstorms.

Facilities are very limited: I had to carry six months worth of stuff in on my back (including soap and shampoo).

Thankfully, there is some anti-

venom in the medical centre as there are some pretty horrible snakes, scorpions and spiders around here (including a green mamba – seen last weekend) and we really have had people find scorpions in their boots like the films.

Being the only Brit hasn't been a problem at all and I have been particularly lucky to have been 'adopted' by the excellent Irish contingent in the headquarters. That said, communications with home are limited and intermittent and the post has to go to France first to enter their BFPO equivalent, so I didn't do so well with Christmas cards last year.

Entertainment is extremely limited; this is the only place that I've been where you have to go to the local restaurant armed and in uniform.

We did, however, have an impromptu 'fireworks night' (actually it was at 7.30am) just before Christmas when a fire started in a tent close to mine. Seven went up in flames and unfortunately there was a large amount of ammunition in them (not mine!) which started going

off. For a moment I thought we were being attacked.

So not a typical posting for a sailor where the nearest coast is the best part of a thousand miles away and I've had all the jokes about this being the biggest beach in the world (except the tide never comes in) and ships of the desert (there are loads of camels around here). Actually there is a camel market in Abéché and the sight of a huge camel train can only be described as 'biblical'.

Funnily enough I haven't found the land environment difficult to adapt to and put that down to the cumulative effect of all the joint-focused training and naval 'flexibility'.

In fact, I spent the 25th anniversary of my entry into BRNC climbing up a local mountain which is the best part of 1,000 miles from the sea, a bit surreal when I realised the date.

Overall, it has been a huge but rewarding challenge. My career manager didn't disappoint when I asked to "do something different".

● (Main image) A sandstorm threatens to engulf the base at Abéché and (above, top to bottom) a colourful if very rudimentary refugee camp; Cdr Skeer holds the base's 'pet' chameleon; and the heads with probably the best view in Africa



Eight bells for clock restoration



● Senior Designer Mike Fitchett, from Smith at Derby, carrying out work on the clock face from Britannia Royal Naval College

THE traditional eight-bell chimes will soon be ringing out again across Britannia Royal Naval College after an absence of almost 18 months.

The complicated process of removing the original machinery and the four clock faces for complete overhaul began in October 2007 – the first time such a major operation has been needed.

Since the installation of the clock in 1904 all maintenance has been carried out *in situ*, but with the floors of both the clock and bell room in the tower needing structural repair the best solution was a comprehensive refurbishment.

Architectural and structural engineers formulated a plan, and RN partners VT Flagship, who managed the job, consulted with all interested parties, including local authorities and English Heritage.

With all the boxes ticked, experts from local and specialist firms got to grips with the task.

Interserve delivered the works through their supply chain, including Torbay building company Marks Building Services, while the clock mechanism and faces travelled to expert clock restorers Smith of Derby.

The clock tower project is the first of several large maintenance projects across the college.

Chatham hub of celebrations

Argus goes green

YOU will not see much of RFA Argus for the next ten or so months – unless you happen to live in Falmouth.

The aviation training and casualty treatment ship is beginning a £23m upgrade in the hands of A&P Group in the Cornish port.

Its workers will fit new kit in the ship's impressive hospital facility as well as overhaul the ship and her living quarters.

The latest CT (3D X-Ray) scanning system is being installed as well as new sterilising equipment.

The hospital facility provides initial, vital care for up to 100 battle casualties before they are transferred to hospitals ashore for more prolonged treatment. It was last used for real during the 2003 Iraq campaign.

Outside the medical compartments, Argus is going green: a state-of-the-art 'bioreactor' will process sewage in a more environmentally-friendly manner, while greener air conditioning and refrigeration plants are also being installed.

Sailors' messes and accommodation are also being revamped in the refit package which will keep A&P workers busy till the year's end.

A BUSY year for the Historic Dockyard at Chatham just got a whole lot busier following the announcement of the first national Armed Forces Day.

The former naval base on the Medway has been planning a series of events for the coming months as 2009 marks the 25th anniversary of its closure as an operational establishment.

But with the addition of a new date in the calendar, suddenly Chatham is going to be the focus of national attention.

Veterans minister Kevan Jones visited the attraction in Kent to announce that the Historic Dockyard had been chosen to host the first national Armed Forces Day on Saturday June 27.

Hundreds of other events are expected to be staged across the country to honour Service personnel past, present and future.

According to the MOD, the day – which will be held on June 27 annually – will "provide the nation with a dedicated day where people can come together to show their appreciation and support of the Armed Forces."

Speaking at the launch of the initiative, Mr Jones said: "Our Armed Forces and veterans rightly deserve the nation's support and recognition."

"They, and their families, have made and continue to make huge personal sacrifices to ensure the interests of our country are defended, and this day is our chance to say 'thank you'."

"We are encouraging all communities to put on some type of event in recognition of their Armed Forces, both past, present and future."

"They form an integral part of the community, and this day enables us to show our appreciation of them."

The concept of an Armed Forces Day grew out of the Veterans Days,

as acknowledged by Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Personnel): "For the past three years, the nation has come together on June 27 to celebrate Veterans Day."

"To build on this success, from 2009 the day will also celebrate the men and women still serving in our Armed Forces and those who may one day come to serve."

"We are planning a whole range of events across the country, and Chatham will have a leading role to play."

Sir Ian Garnett, Chairman of the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, added:

"We are looking forward to arranging a great day out which will enable the public, young and old, from many different walks of life, to join the men and women of our Armed Forces and celebrate their achievements both now and in the past."

The dockyard closed in 1984, but many historic buildings, vessels, facilities and artefacts have been preserved on an 80-acre site in a burgeoning heritage area.

The Trust's 25th anniversary programme gets under way on April 1 when a 25-gun salute will mark the start of party time.

The day will also see the official opening of an exhibition charting the progress of the Trust.

Easter weekend sees the Medway Festival of Steam and Transport; hundreds of exhibits such as vintage cars, military vehicles and traction engines, among others, will be on display on April 12 and 13.

May brings a week-long celebration of the childhood legends of pirates – story-telling, puppet shows and costumed characters will be in evidence between May 23 and 29, as well as a treasure trail, party games and Captain Flint, a "mischievous pilfering pirate parrot".

On the evening of Armed Forces Day – June 27 – a separate, ticketed event will feature military bands at a Beat Retreat and



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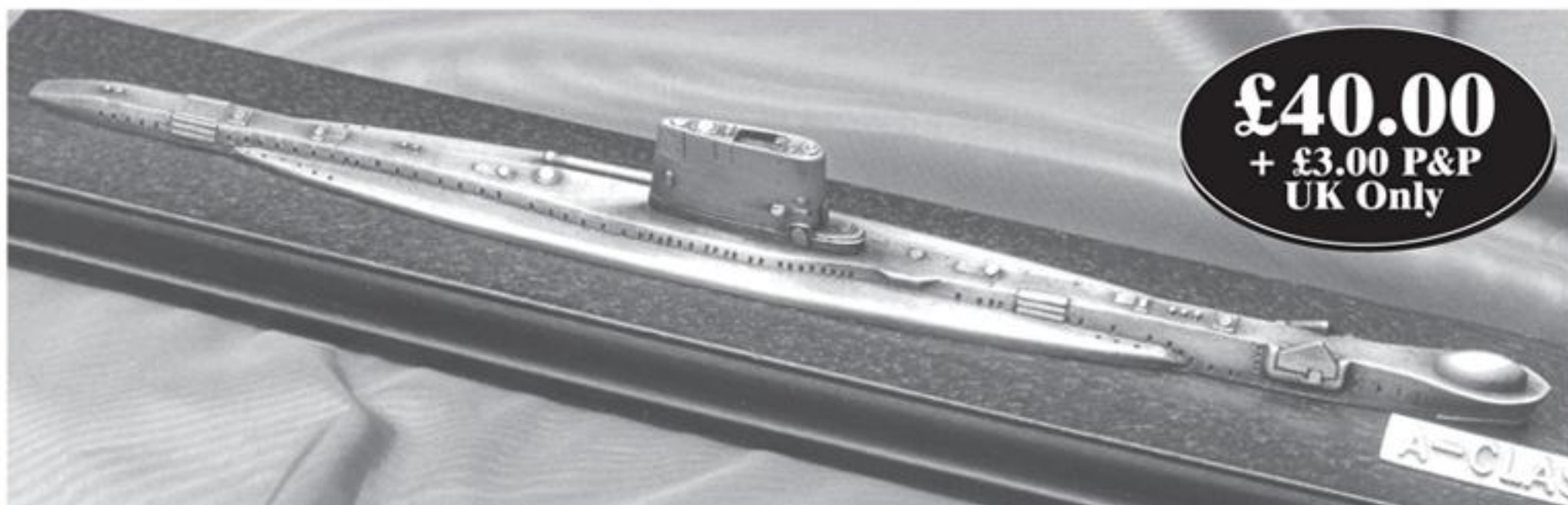
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JACK OF ALL TRADES
IN THE latest of our occasional series on the myriad jobs in the Senior Service, 34-year-old Sgt Marcus 'Smudge' Smith RM (pictured below) gives us an insight into the work of a unit armourer with the UK Landing Force Command Support Group in Lashkar Gah.

"I AM responsible for the inspection, maintenance and upkeep of all the weapons being used in this immediate area, somewhere in the region of 2,000 pieces of kit."

This includes standard rifles and pistols, grenade-launchers, grenade machine guns, the awesome .50 calibre heavy machine guns and sniper rifles. I look after night-vision goggles, telescopic sights and other specialist bits that the lads use on a daily basis.

The kit is great; things like the SA80 rifle have had lots of modifications to improve them to cope with the conditions, but there is always a battle. Here in Afghanistan, you put oil on the working parts and you get dust sticking to it, but if you don't oil it, the temperatures and the dew cause rust. It's a tough job to keep it all working smoothly, but it never lets them down.

Most of the time, it is simple fair wear and tear that I will have to deal with. The going is tough out here; there's the dust, then the high heat and extreme cold which can cause metal expansion and contraction. Sometimes weapons get hit by enemy fire and sustain damage.

My job is making sure that everyone has full confidence in their kit so we know it will work in a situation when they need it to work and that it is safe for the user and those around them. No-one wants a misfire from a machine gun.

Kit is good and the lads look after it, they're professional and this is second nature to them all."

This is Smudge's first tour to Afghanistan, despite having served all over the world, including Norway, Greece, Egypt and even a year in Diego Garcia, in a career spanning more than 17 years.

"I've been in camouflage since I was three and playing soldiers all my life. I was always going to join up. I've travelled the world and had some experiences. Armoury is a trade for me and one I've been doing for 13 years."

It's satisfying to get out here and do the job I've trained to do. I know that what we are doing here is making a difference and I'm playing my part in that."

Smudge's deployment is due to end this month and with just weeks to go, his finely-tuned sights are now firmly on getting home to his young family; wife Sarah and three sons, Lewis, five, Harrison, two, and Bailey, one.

"It's always hard coming away like this. I'm missing my little ones and their early years, so of course I can't wait to get back. Most families have one child who plays up a bit, but mine, they're all bonkers! Sarah is an incredibly strong person, she just gets on with it, being a mother and a housewife all on her own. My missus is hoofin'!"

We'll go on a bit of a holiday together when I get back, spend some good quality time together and get back to see my parents in Burgess Hill."

Until then, there's the small matter of continuing to make sure that the equipment that is the backbone of 3 Commando Brigade's mission continues to operate smoothly.



Are you fit to

FITNESS is crucial in a fighting force – but being fit to fight should not be the sole reason for pursuing well-being.

The Royal Navy is revamping its physical development programme under the concept of 'Fit to fight – Fit for life', with fitness taking a high priority in the Senior Service, according to the man tasked with leading the initiative.

Working for Cdre David Dickens, Capt Mike Farrage, the first Director of Naval Physical Development (DNPD), said the strategy does not just consist of a message from on high – it is a cultural issue which needs commitment at all levels, including command.

Physical development has three aspects in the Armed Forces:

■ **Physical Education (PE)**, which helps people withstand the rigours of Service life by promoting exercise habits and a healthy lifestyle.

Within this category is the conduct of the RN Fitness Test (RNFT), the core PT syllabus, training and personal physical fitness training.

■ **Adventurous Training (AT)**, which provides challenging outdoor training and controlled exposure to risk, giving personnel the confidence to cope with events outside their comfort zone.

It also develops rational control of fear, promotes leadership and teamwork and helps physical fitness and courage.

■ **Sport**, which covers both personal and team development.

Besides helping with physical fitness and mental strength – the will to win – sport also strengthens teamwork, identity, self-reliance and mental resolve.

Each element is important, but the trinity is seen as an integral part of developing the 'moral component' of operational capability – imbuing the Navy with a winning ethos as well as providing a physically-capable fighting force.

The baton has been picked up by Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Alan Massey, who has made it one of his highest priorities to reinvigorate the physical development agenda through promoting a healthy lifestyle across the Naval Service.

And one thing he wants to see change is the attitude towards sport, AT and fitness.

Fitness is not a particular problem in the ranks of the Navy, but the Senior Service has noted the ominous signals from Civvy Street.

Almost two thirds of the UK adult population are overweight or obese (ie grossly fat), and some predictions foresee a trend which, if left unchecked, will see 90 per cent of the British public classified as overweight by 2050.

Obesity reduces life expectancy by some 11 years on average, and within the Navy those who are overweight through excess body fat are at higher risk of ill health and consequent medical downgrading – placing more strain on medical services and on those colleagues who remain 'fit for task'.

The Senior Service should, Capt Farrage asserts, "emphasise a culture where unhealthy weight levels are considered unacceptable."

Capt Farrage continued: "Commanding and Divisional Officers have a significant role to play in meeting these specific challenges by ensuring that the personnel are given regular programmed sport and adventurous training,

Get out and get AT it

THERE are numerous huts, lodges and cottages administered by the Services for AT activities.

Among them are:

■ **Gutter Tor Refuge**, Dartmoor: a cottage facility with space for 40, ideal for exploring Dartmoor. Contact OLT Office, HMS Raleigh, 01752 811322 (9375 41322).

■ **Capel Curig**, Gwynedd: two Level 2 AT units for 278 people plus 90 camping. Camp includes walking, kayaking, 8m climbing wall. Contact The Commandant, Capel Curig Training Camp, Betws-y-Coed, North Wales, tel 01690 720291 or 720453.

■ **JSMTC**, Anglesey: Climbing, mountaineering, caving, kayaking and canoeing, also sailing centre. Contact JSMTC Indefatigable Nuffield Accommodation Centre, Plas Llanfair, Anglesey LL61 6NT, tel

01248 718362 (95581 79620, www.nuffieldanglesey.org.uk)

■ **Tai Newyddion**, Snowdonia: Space for 33 in two units, mountain activities. Contact the Warden, Tai Newyddion, warden@tai-newyddion.co.uk or tel 01248 600416.

■ **Balmacara**, Wester Ross: up to 33 people, water activities including diving on a sunken minelayer. Contact SO Ops BUTEC, Kyle of Lochalsh, IV40 8AJ, tel 01599 566295, www.rafs-aa.org.uk/Balmacara_House.pdf

■ **Rothiemurchus Estate**, nr Aviemore: Up to 110 people, includes dry ski slope and quad bikes. Contact the Warden, Rothiemurchus Estate, 01479 861288.

For more information on Adventurous Training see www.ahrc.co.uk



www.navykayaking.dii.rmil.uk



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Germany,
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fight and

pass the RNFT, and are aware of the benefits of a healthy diet and a responsible attitude towards alcohol.

"As DNPD, and head of the PT specialisation, my intent is to change the RN culture to 'time for' physical development – not 'time off for' – strengthening the moral component of operational capability and enabling Naval Service personnel to be 'fit to fight and 'fit for life'."

On arrival in post last year, one of Capt Farrage's priorities, as head of the PT specialisation, was to return the PT branch to full manning and introduce a more structured career path together with a specialisation adviser, WOPT Glen Young.

While continuing to work on those areas, 2009 brings new objectives.

The first is enhancing the moral component of operational capability through a change of culture which embraces everyone "from flag rank down the command chain".

The new culture would see time during the core working week set aside for sport, AT and PE, including the introduction of at least three hours of formal vigorous physical activity for all personnel each week.

In addition, Capt Farrage intends to encourage

a healthier lifestyle for Naval Service personnel through a closer adherence to the RNFT rules, and by the implementation of a Naval Command health promotion and protection campaign plan, which will be rolled out across the Naval Command later this month.

That will yield a leaner, meaner fighting unit – and with it the vital Royal Navy will to win, crucial to the moral component which Capt Farrage is also charged with assessing and nurturing.

Although the impetus to attain and maintain fitness must come from the individual concerned, the importance of the command and divisional input is reinforced by a letter from Naval Secretary Rear Admiral Charles Montgomery to the commanding officers of all ships and establishments.

The admiral said there had been notable improvements in some areas, but that there was still work to be done by the partnership between command and divisional officers.

Of particular significance is passing the RNFT and the remedial training package for those who fail – as well as the warning process for those who demonstrate "a poor attitude to physical fitness."

So – are you fit to fight and fit for life?

Levels of ATtainment

ADVENTUROUS training (AT) is one of the three pillars of Physical Development in the Armed Forces.

And AT is itself sub-divided into four levels, forming a coherent path up through degrees of expertise.

Level 1 AT is directed at people in training – in the case of the RN, a typical example would be those under Phase 1 training at HMS Raleigh who might go out on an expedition on Dartmoor.

Phase 2 trainees would also fall within this category, perhaps on a course at Tal-y-bont or undergoing leadership training.

The only RN Level 2 facility is the Navy Outdoor Centre (Germany), home of Exercise Bavarian Surprise.

The centre aims to encourage wider participation in AT, exposing personnel to

a range of activities, after minimal training, occasionally operating outside their comfort zone, where they have to apply themselves both physically and mentally in an enjoyable yet challenging environment.

Depending on the season, skiing, climbing, klettersteig (climbing and scrambling on wires and ladders), mountain biking, kayaking and canyoning are available, amongst other activities.

There is usually no cost for personnel on trained strength, and bespoke packages for groups can also be arranged, though this may incur personal contributions.

See www.englishguthouse.co.uk

For those who wish to take AT further, Level 3 sees personnel qualified to lead their own expeditions as instructors, while a Level 4 centre trains individuals to a standard which allows them to train and assess instructors.

fit for life?



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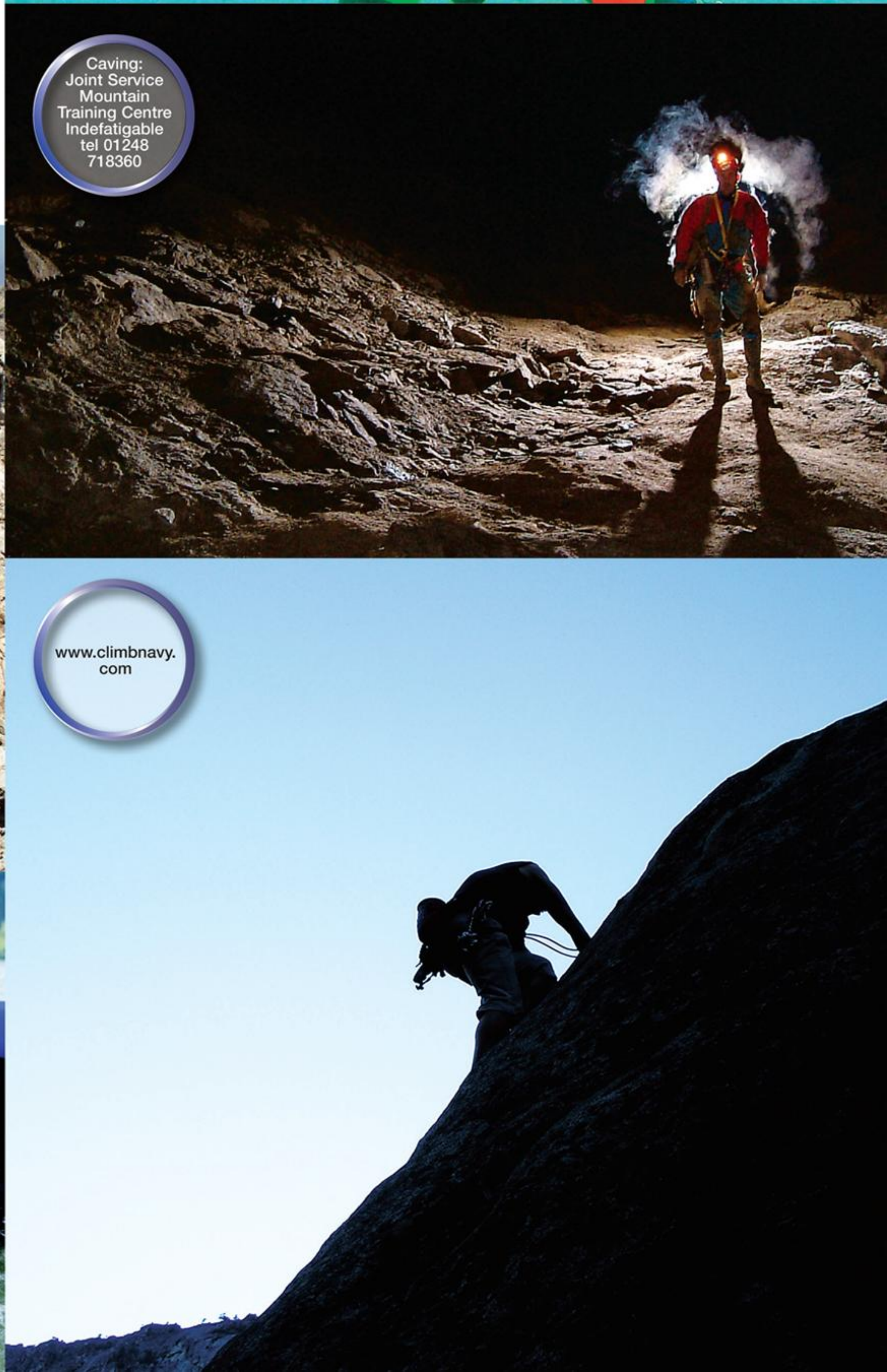
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Part-time,

How the men of RMR



● The legend that is L/Cpl 'Fletch' Fletcher posing next to a tracked vehicle. Wounded in Afghanistan, he is set upon some payback

'The best job I have ever done...'

YOU might think that Cpl Robert 'Coops' Cooper would be in a bit of a cleft stick.

On the one hand, he is a staff nurse in the cardio-thoracic department at Bristol Royal Infirmary, caring for heart attack victims and patients undergoing bypasses or valve replacements.

On the other he is a RM Reservist skilled in handling devastating weaponry, either a .5 calibre heavy machine gun or an anti-tank missile.

He has also been a night-club bouncer, a martial arts instructor and a personal bodyguard in his time, but there are common threads to be seen.

"It's all part of the same package. You do not put on your green beret, run around and just blow things up – although, obviously, we do do that sometimes," said Coops, a nurse for 14 years and a reservist for half of that time.

"But when you go into a country like Afghanistan you go to help that country.

"You are digging a country out of an incredibly dark part of their history brought about by an incredibly dark and repressive regime."

Coops was struck by the CIMIC (Civilian Military Co-operation) element to operations in Afghanistan when he deployed in 2007-8.

"So it's not just about going to a foreign country, opening up with heavy weapons and blowing things apart – although my SQ happens to be heavy weapons," said Coops.

"I was out there for just

under seven months in total. It's something I wanted to do.

"I love nursing but I'm 37. I wish I was 27 and had done this 10 or 15 years earlier.

"It is the best job I have ever done."

"I was lucky to be with a heavy weapons troop in Kajaki, and it was just incredible."

Coops is adding another string to his bow by taking specialist courses to qualify as a troop medic.

"Because I have got a BSc (Hons) in health and RGN qualifications, I was allowed to do BATLS (Battlefield Advanced Trauma Life Support)," he said.

"Some of the Army and Navy nurses I met out there were awesome. I came away learning a hell of a lot from them."

His aim is to qualify as a CMT (Combat Medical Technician) – a lower grade than his nursing career but more specialised.

"So when I go out again I can work as a heavy weapons operator and as a CMT," said Coops.

"I love my work in hospital and with patients, but there is something you do not get in a civilian environment which you get in a military environment.

"Since I have been back I have missed the camaraderie of the lads – you know when the s**t hits the fan those lads are going to stand next to you, and that that lad is a bootneck, which makes it even better.

"It's been one of the most intense periods of my life – exhilarating, exciting.



● Cpl 'Coops' Cooper poses next to a WMIK Land Rover

"I was sitting in a hole next to a marine called Hodgy, a brilliant marine, sitting there as the place was shot away. He's sitting there with a tab in his mouth laughing and chatting away, and I thought 'that's cool...'

"My employer, my ward sister and other managers have been fantastic – the whole team are just fantastic.

"We filmed a recent DVD in the hospital for the RMR, and the hospital used part of it in their HR campaign."

One image from the front-line sums up the work of military medics, as far as Coops is concerned.

"Coming from a nursing background, there was a Navy medic – Stretch – one of the most awesome medics I have seen.

"He was putting these four guys together; their ankles had been shot through.

"The bullets were smashing round his head and he didn't flinch once.

"The RN and Army doctors and medics were fantastic – they put me to shame, and I have got a degree.

"Stretch is a regular but he was awesome."

Behind that bald statement is a subtle and powerful piece of military alchemy that converts part-time soldiers seamlessly into front-line Royal Marines commandos and back again.

And do not think for a moment that part-time = second-rate. There is no short-cut to the green beret.

"Reservists do exactly the same tests as regular Royal Marines," said Lt Col Herring.

"They earn the green beret and it stands for exactly the same thing."

The intakes tend to be pretty eclectic. A recent group of 35 included two ex-Army, two with Masters degrees, 14 graduates and six undergraduates with an average age of 25 – "a very, very high calibre," according to the CO.

RMR Bristol comprises Bristol (where the HQ is located) and four detachments – Cardiff, Poole, Plymouth and Lympstone – each with an OC.

The fact that the unit is scattered across the south west does not help in terms of team-building, but the use of whole-unit training serials, conference calls and the like ensures that there is a sense of belonging in the detachments.

And belonging is one of the key concepts if the all-for-one spirit is to be nurtured.

All the detachments have a Holding Troop which allows (unpaid) recruits to train, build fitness and feel part of the unit before they formally join one of the biannual intakes.

"The moral component is important," said Lt Col Herring.

"They need to feel wanted by their Royal Marines family – and they do."

'Intelligent selection' means taking people who really want to be a marine, and 'intelligent employment' means using them for the tasks in which they trained, which should lead to "a lot of happy and fulfilled Reservists."

Training is split between two phases, both demanding high levels of energy, commitment and sheer grit.

Phase I will take around six months, with basic weekly training and weekend exercises at unit level culminating in a two-week course at the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone.

Phase II takes perhaps five months but even more commitment in terms of training, and again culminates in fearsome Commando tests at Lympstone, after which the Reservist is awarded the coveted green beret.

After that there is Phase III (continuation training), depending on a man's specialist qualification, which includes field firing, amphibious training and helicopter drills.

He is now a General Duties marine – a rifleman – and Royal Marine ethos has it that every bootneck, no matter what bolt-on skills he has learned, remains at

● Don't give up the day job... Coops inspects the leg of a local



Same beret, different

L/CPL Matt Hunt is a station manager in the Avon Fire and Rescue Service, based in the centre of Bristol, having been thwarted in his initial bid to join the Royals by the Falklands effect.

"I wanted to join the regular Corps after I left school but they were toppers at the time and were not recruiting – they were really strong after the Falklands," said Matt, who joined the Reserves in 1985.

Over the past couple of years Matt has tested himself in two very different scenarios – the Falklands in 2007, with around 60 RMR colleagues, and as one of 30 Reservists exercising in the jungle with Fleet Protection Group RM in Belize last year.

"It was an experience which was defining for me," said Matt.

"The Falklands was the war of my generation and shows the level of proficiency the Royal Marines

had then and today."

Besides practising their skills in the famous four seasons in one day – everything from snow to harsh sunlight – the Reservists also got to see the iconic battlefields.

"To visit where the Corps was and see what they fought over was humbling. It was a surprise to me the amount of detritus there. There was a cache of shovels, backpacks etc – almost as a testament to the people that went before."

Belize also proved an exacting location.

"That again was a harsh and telling environment, with some horrendous living conditions – spiders, snails, scorpions, fire ants, howler monkeys, and certain plants you had to be very careful of.

"It was close to the Guatemalan border, in dense canopy, in terrain mapped a long time ago, using maps and compasses.

"If something went wrong you

had got the skills you'd learned and the hands God gave you, and basic skills to keep you and your fellow bootnecks safe till you could get out.

"The temperature was 35-50 degrees, and we were carrying weights of up to 100lb.

"It was good – it was a learning experience for me and develops your skills brilliantly.

"The Reserves is a fantastic opportunity for people to be exposed to the military and also have the ability to have a normal life as well.

"If someone doesn't want to commit to a full-time career in the Services, but wants to get a green beret, you can do both – it doesn't take any different a person."

Mne Pat Waldron is a veteran of the unit, having been a reservist since late 1987.

He has not deployed yet: sadly for him, integration between the

front-line

RMR Bristol straddle two worlds

heart a rifleman.

This distinction marks the Corps as different from all other infantry and has been tested on operations as recently as Herrick 5 in Afghanistan when India Coy was stood up from the waifs and strays of CSG; it included BRF, chefs, drivers, clerks, VMs – the list was almost endless and it performed with distinction as a fighting company.

Ongoing skills training carries on throughout the rest of a career, and there are opportunities for specialist training, foreign deployment and deployments alongside the regulars.

"Immediately there is a lot of respect for the Reserves," said Lt Col Herring.

"The comment we will get is that they are doing a full-time job and this as well, often followed by 'I couldn't do that!'"

"It is a tough ask – our guys are often more mature, but they have families and jobs to think of."

Officers are 'grown' from the ranks, and will be expected to have got a tour of duty under their belt before they seek to take that step.

RMR units have their own specialisations, and one of Bristol's fortes is heavy weapons (heavy machine guns, Javelin anti-tank missiles), skills which are much in demand in combat.

"It's great because the guys are in a front-line role," said Lt Col Herring.

"They do not sit around in the rear echelons – it is what they joined for and if we did not send them they would quit."

Other specialist qualifications (SQs) which Reservists can learn mirror the regular Corps and include landing craft, mortars and the art of the sniper – one of the toughest roles in a tough organisation.

"Two men from this unit passed the regular course recently and both are with 42 Cdo in Afghanistan now as snipers," said Lt Col Herring.

"It just demonstrates the staggering quality of the RMR, and it is real integration."

"On Operation Herrick 7, out of 44 RMR with 40 Cdo, just one was a 'Mr Fixit' to the rear of the line, while 30 per cent of Recce Troop were Reservists."

Bristol has a trained strength of around 115, of which perhaps two-fifths are ex-regulars.

As well as integrating into fighting formations, the unit also provides up to eight recruits to the regular Corps annually, as well as four to six young officers in the YO batch.

With the Naval Service currently dominating affairs in Afghanistan, including the current deployment of 3 Cdo Brigade RM, more than a quarter of the trained strength could be mobilised, and in crossover

skills

Corps and the Maritime Reserve was not as close when he first joined as it is today.

"The Reserves have changed," said Pat, a technical supervisor in civilian life.

"When I joined, deploying with the regular Corps was something that generally didn't happen, and the RMR didn't get roles that they wanted."

"Young lads joining now are deploying and joining regulars – it's a shame it didn't happen ten years ago."

"I could still be deployed as a marine in a fighting company up to the age of 45 – and I have got no problems being deployed."

"It is unlikely, but it doesn't make me feel any different about the Reserves."

"The Corps has done a lot for me as a person – it made me a more confident person, which I wasn't before."

periods between phases (the 'RIP' or Relief in Place), when troops are swapping over, that figure can rise to more than 40 per cent.

Bristol has suffered its share of casualties.

One, L/Cpl Nick Clarke, was shot through the shins, and although he is working hard to regain his fitness (and he intends to deploy again), apparently the sight of the wounds after a full-on jogging session, when his trainers rub against the scars, is one to be avoided.

Similarly the wounds suffered by Mne (now L/Cpl) David 'Fletch' Fletcher have passed into legend in the unit (see below).

But even while recovering in the UK these part-time warriors do not stray far from the fold.

Both Fletch and Clarke, who was injured in the same attack, work at the unit while they build towards their next deployment, and to keep themselves out of mischief they thrash the life out of Zapcat boats (they wore out their last one, so if anyone has one spare they would like to hear from you...).

The support provided by the unit is manifest in many ways, according to Bristol detachment OC Maj Cliff Dare.

"The Corps learned lessons on the long sail back from the Falklands – being with your mates and talking about things that had happened helped with the normalisation process," said Maj Dare.

"We know the key signs to look for in people when they return."

"The modern Corps is a 'market leader' in the TRIM (Trauma Risk Management) process."

But the camaraderie and keeping busy does not have the same effect back home, where wives, girlfriends and families run the risk of feeling isolated.

Again, the high degree of integration between Reservists

and regulars helps, with regular units extending their pastoral role to the families and friends of embedded Reservists.

One element of life in the RMR is entirely down to the individual – that of returning to civilian life after a deployment.

Having risked life and limb on the front-line, having to deal with piffing 'problems' on Civvy Street can take some adjustment.

Mne Dave Snell does not find it difficult: "You leave it behind, put your civvy head on and just crack on."

Maj Dare demurred: "I found it difficult to get back to civilian life," he said, adding that he did not have a high regard for some civvies who have closed minds (okay, I had to paraphrase that...).

But the fact that most do cope is helped by the calibre of the troops.

"Generally the quality is very high – Royal Marines and Royal Marines Reservists are very bright."

"The reason we can settle back is because we can think it through."



● (Above and below) The appliance of science... Royal and budding teacher Mne David Snell on patrol near Sangin

Give 'em hell, Snell

MNE David Snell, a member of RMR Bristol for eight years, manages to combine soldiering with training to be a science teacher – he is due to qualify in the summer.

"I should have joined when I was younger, and joined the regular Corps, but for various reasons..." said David.

"At the moment things are not too bad. I am a marine, but the workload is reasonable. Got to balance personal life with this and work life."

"This gives you more confidence, and makes you more rounded. It gives you greater interpersonal

skills which you can take back to any workplace."

"I am a marine but you get given the opportunity to present to recruits, to take lessons – all these great interpersonal and soft skills an employer looks for."

"This has more than lived up to expectations – I have had great opportunities in my time here – not just travelling but seeing locations and places that would have been difficult to get to, and doing things a little out of the ordinary."

"I came back in March of last year having spent six months in Afghanistan, just north of Sangin."

"I was on patrols – as a marine you become part of a fighting company. You fully integrate with the regular Royal Marines."

"It was pretty much a question of slotting in. You have to adjust in your own mind to going away to a difficult situation and family and friends have to accept that."

"But it was very easy to slot in. The guys you work with; okay, they give you a bit of banter about it but after six months you have worked with them for 24 hours a day."

"Regulars just accept us."

"I was at Fort Inkerman, and that was the most contacted location in the province. It was interesting..."

"You have a job to do, and the CO at the location has a job to fulfil, so consequently you have got patrols to carry out."

"After seven patrols you probably had a day or two off – but there's a job to be done and you have got to do it."



'I will deploy again...'

L/CPL Fletch Fletcher joined the Cardiff detachment of RMR Bristol in 2001, having left the regular Corps part of the way through training.

He left for a couple of years, but rejoined in 2005; within a couple of years he was in Afghanistan with 40 Cdo.

"We were operating out of a forward operating base, FOB Inkerman – or FOB Incoming, as we knew it because of the number of contacts – with 40 Recce Troop near Sangin in Helmand," said L/Cpl Fletcher.

"We were out on a routine foot patrol on November 9 2007 as we had been doing since September."

"It was my first deployment to Afghanistan, but then if I had wanted to sit on my hands and do nothing I would have joined a unit that did that."

"I joined the RMR for a reason, and that is because they go out and do a bit of stuff."

"We were the last section in a troop snake – the fire support section – and I was the machine gunner."

"We had interpreters and radios with us, scanning known Taliban frequencies, and we heard they were moving up to surround us and ambush us."

"We weren't that worried because it was pretty much a daily occurrence."

"They would pop up, shoot at us for a bit and then disappear down trenches and ditches."

"It does keep you focused knowing at any time anything could happen."

"We got contacted from about 50 metres away, from some long grass."

"We immediately identified where the fire was from – it was mainly small arms fire."

"We laid down some fire from behind a natural defence by a stream."

"Because I had the machine gun, me and my mate Mne Fenwick got it up to a compound roof – basically the top of a mud hut – to lay down some suppressing fire to pin the Taliban down."

"We got up there and I managed to get a couple of rounds off, but at that point a rocket-propelled grenade hit the roof of the building

we were on."

Fenwick was injured as he was blown off the roof, but Fletch bore the brunt.

"The blast sent me back six or seven feet, and smashed the gun up pretty good – and me with it."

"I was stunned to begin with, but then I looked down to see a s**tload of blood, and I thought 'That's not good.'"

"I realised I needed some help and called for my oppos – and my mum as well."

Fletch does not recall his colleagues dragging him from the roof – he faded in and out of consciousness as the gun battle raged around him.

"The Alpha Company medics tourniquetted my leg and gave me morphine – four of us had been injured there."

"I was told that one of the medics did a bang-up job – I have never actually met the bloke but I know his name was Oggie [press reports at the time named the medic as Mne Gary Ogden]."

"There were more explosions and big bangs. They couldn't take us out the same way we went in because the fire was coming from that direction, so they had to blow a hole in the rear wall using a bar-mine."

"Just before that went off my mate and section commander lay on top of me and told me there would be a loud explosion but I was not to worry."

"I don't remember going through the wall or going to the helicopter – but I do remember the rear door gunner saying 'Okay, mate?' and me asking for a glass of water."

"Then I passed out and woke up in Selly Oak Hospital five days later."

"When I woke up, Mum, Dad and my sister were there, and my CO and AO."

"Doctors told me what they had done. I had lost quite a bit of muscle from my leg."

"I lost three teeth, and that really p**sed me off more than anything else – I had a nice smile up to then, now I have to do a side smile."

"I was injured in both legs – I lost the majority of the muscle from my right thigh down to the knee, and ruptured an artery in

my left leg. They replaced that with one from my arm, and some of the muscle was damaged on that leg too."

"The doctors gave me a prognosis in early December, and told me if I was lucky I might be walking by May."

"By May I was running three miles, because that was my aim. I'm not going to be a normal person doing the rehabilitation as a normal person would – I'm going to push it."

"It's the Royal Marines ethos – I'm not going to lie down and take it slowly."

"Fitness is not a problem, nor is strength, but I have skin grafts and they do open up, because it is thin skin, probably because I didn't take things slowly."

"But I will deploy again – hopefully in an anti-tank role, in fire support capacity from a static point or vehicle."

"I have unfinished business."



● Bunker mentality... L/Cpl Nick Clarke poses in a forward outpost



BRISTLING with guns, the offshore raiding craft smashes to a halt in the waters off RM Turnchapel. The green berets of 539 Assault Squadron focus grim-faced on their targets. The journalists floating in their own boats look slightly alarmed.

The small boat experts of 539 have welcomed the arrival of a new model of their offshore raiding craft (ORC) – the somewhat uninspiringly named mid-console variant, but let's call it the gunboat as that sums up its role so much more graphically.

The existing ORCs – the troop-carrying variant – are designed with the console (the bit where you drive the thing) at the back of the craft, with seats for up to eight men in front. Ideal for troop-carrying but not the ideal arrangement to provide 360° gunfire cover. The seats can come out, guns can be bolted in, armour cladding can be attached. But structurally the boat remains the same.

Now the Royal Marines of 539 ASRM are being supplied with five bespoke gunboats – these are craft dedicated to the core of their being to the fire-support role.

It offers far better protection to the men inside – it boasts 7.62mm ballistic protection; it has thermal and image intensifiers in advance of its troop-carrying sibling, and greatly improved visibility for the men at the console.

It's portable, can be carried on road trailers, put into the back of a Hercules, slung under Chinooks. It's well suited to the riverine environments in which they patrol and operate.

It runs with a crew of seven: two coxswains, two gunners on the forward GPMGs, three in the stern – two on the guns, and one in the middle controlling all the fire.

In these new ORCs, the console sits in the middle, allowing the gunners to be arrayed to cover every angle; this gunboat lives up to that title, carrying heavy machine guns, grenade machine guns, or GPMGs.

Capt Matt Pinckney, OC Raiding Troop 539 ASRM, explained: "This weapon system will always be firing. There is never a time where from the angle of the craft we will be unable to fire."

"What you don't want in a firefight is nobody firing because then obviously the enemy will be able to get the upperhand."

It definitely gets the job done. And as is often required by the Royal Marines, it is versatile enough to do other jobs too.

Capt Pinckney admits: "The US have bespoke riverine craft, they don't have craft that try to do everything. We're as likely to come from 30 miles off-shore and be living in the craft off Norway as we are to be upriver in Iraq or somewhere similar."

Ten of the 40 ORCs will be the dedicated mid-console gunboats, split among 539 ASRM, 10 LC Training Squadron and FPGRM.

Other changes within 539 have seen the steady growth of the beach reconnaissance role of the Squadron Reconnaissance Unit become integrated within the Brigade Reconnaissance Force.

● Top and left: the mid-console variant of the Offshore Raiding Craft; right and below: the Squadron Reconnaissance Unit train in the Plymouth area





Soldiers from the sea

WITH more of a splash than a crash, a landing craft nudges the shore, its ramp rapidly drops on to the sand and pebbles below.

Twenty troops tramp quickly through the water, then throw themselves on to the ground, hiding behind tufts of grass.

On a bluff a couple of hundred feet above the water's edge there's the chatter of machine-guns, the echo bouncing off the crag-strewn ridges.

Up a ravine to the right, a few men puff and wheeze, zig-zagging their way up this hill overlooking Port Howard — not, as its name suggests, a port, but an inlet flanked to the east by an imposing ridge and to the west by a series



IT'S bread and butter to the Royal Marines, but it's not traditionally been on the Army's plate... until now. Men of 1 Mercian (Cheshire) were introduced to amphibious warfare courtesy of RFA Largs Bay in the Falklands. **Richard Hargreaves** and photographer **LA(Phot) Iggy Roberts** went along.



bounces around the rocky terrain, mingled by the sporadic deep boom of mortar fire.

Why, you might ask, is *Navy News* dedicating so much space to a bunch of pongoes?

Well, let me answer that one.

It's because without the boys in dark blue — the RFA and Fleet Air Arm to be precise, in this instance — this simply wouldn't be possible.

You see, it should have been HMS Northumberland patrolling the Falklands right about now... but she's thwarting pirates in the Indian Ocean (see pages 11-13).

The decision not to send the frigate to the South Atlantic and 'only' send an RFA raised a few eyebrows Roger Moore-style in Fleet Street.

And, to be sure, RFA Largs Bay is not bristling with weaponry. She possesses no missiles, no 4.5in gun, no torpedoes.

But then try fitting an infantry company (plus kit), BVs, trucks, tents and a Rapier battery on a Type 23 (actually don't, because you can't...).

Then try ferrying all that lot ashore by Lynx or RIB (actually don't, because you can't...).

"It's not a question of losing a warship," Largs' CO Capt Kim Watts says emphatically. "We offer a lot more — albeit very different. A warship cannot take the equipment we can."

Indeed. Before leaving the UK, her dock was loaded with diggers, tractors, trucks, hawsers, BV tracked vehicles, all safely anchored down next to Betsy,

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of no-less imposing rocky hillocks and peaks.

The soldiers, 3 Platoon, 1 Mercian (Cheshire), take cover behind a cluster of rocks, bringing heavy machine-gun fire to bear on the hill top.

The more distant gun chatter relaxes. The men continue upwards, moving along the top of

the hill, then sweeping back down it, rooting a couple of snipers out from foxholes impossible to see from the shore.

The troops pause for a couple of hours (time for a wet and a bacon butty, of course) then regroup for a final assault up an even steeper slope — Suffolk Hill for the record, although most of these peaks

are virtually indistinguishable — towards even craggier rocks.

At the appointed hour, the troops begin 'pepperpotting' up the hill — advancing in 'sticks' (small groups), one stick on the left, then one in the centre, then one on the right.

Once again the chatter of machine-gun and small arms fire



**“It's not a question of losing a warship.
We offer a lot more – albeit very different.”**



Continued from page 25

Largs' very own blue fork lift.

All that takes up barely half the loading bay; the rest of the space was free for the Falklands forces to use. Which they did.

The landing support ship was the crux of Cape Bayonet, a week-long exercise designed to test the ability of all three Services to safeguard the islands.

Bayonet has been staged for the past quarter century in various guises and under various codenames (many readers might remember Purple Strike).

In all that time, range officer Marvin Clarke cannot recall working with a ship either of Largs' size or potential.

"If you have a destroyer or frigate, the accommodation's not as good, the kit we can use is much more basic, and moving people by aircraft is very, very time consuming," he says.

As the evening of Tuesday January 20 demonstrates. Thirty or so troops are due to be returned from shore to Largs by landing craft so they can take part in a beach assault the following morning.

Except the Falklands weather intervenes. There's no way of getting the men back by boat.

Good job there's Plan B: Largs' Lynx. It takes a good half dozen trips by pilot Lt Cdr Lee Davies and his observer Lt Vince Owen to bring the troops with their

kit aboard.

It's the first time the latest variant of the Mk8 Lynx has deployed. It is, says senior maintenance rating CPO(AET) Baz Firth, "a very Gucci bit of kit".

And it's a very Gucci bit of kit which is heavily in demand (q.v. tonight's unscheduled trips).

219 Flight – aka the 'Pillage idiots' in homage to Largs' Viking mascot – are airborne 30-40 hours every month deployed on the back of a Type 42. They're clocking up around 60 hours in the Falklands.

That they can do so is thanks, in part, to the TAS or 'temporary air shelter' – "It's not a hangar," Baz stresses – a large barn-like structure bolted on to the flight deck behind the superstructure.

It looks rather flimsy – the sides flap furiously in the wind – but it's withstood gusts of more than 80kts. And, crucially, it shields the Lynx and its maintainers from the elements.

815 NAS flights typically embark in destroyers and frigates. Not only is the flight deck huge but the 'not hangar' gives the engineers three times more space to work on the Lynx during downtime.

Extra space isn't just confined, so to speak, to the flight deck. Accommodation isn't bad.

"On a Type 22 you'll be living in a six-man mess," Baz says. "Here I have my own cabin, en-suite, colour TV, Sky. The

flight commander even has a bath."

Such luxuries could mean there's a fear of 'going native'. Luckily (or unluckily, depending upon your perspective), the tempo on Largs guillotines that.

"It has been hard work – 16 to 18-hour days," Baz points out.

"A 14-hour day is a bonus. But it's been operational. This is what we want to do. None of us has been on an amphibious ship before. There's just so much variety."

The aircrew agree.

"Working on an RFA after RN ships is a great change," says Lt Owen. "You see things from another point of view. It's been a dream deployment for us – there's been a bit of everything."

"The Falklands are a great training area – it's a lot easier to do low-level flying, we can work with the RAF Tornados, and flying along the ridges at night wearing night vision goggles is an exhilarating feeling."

If the men of the Cheshires didn't

necessarily share that 'exhilarating feeling', they did at least enjoy a novel feeling. Several novel feelings actually. Good accommodation. Good food (better than at Mount Pleasant, they pointed out). And the odd touch of sea sickness.

"I'm not quite the water enthusiast to want to do this full time," says platoon signaller Pte Gaz Pritchard.

"Not many of the lads have done beach landings. It's been an absolutely great experience – definitely the sort of thing we want to do more of."

His platoon commander, Lt Philip Dyson,

agrees. "We're not marines, we don't have anything to do with the sea, so it's been a fantastic experience."

"We have been very warmly welcomed – the lads have been chuffed. It's certainly better than our normal form of transport: the back of a four-tonne truck or on foot."

As sailing doesn't come naturally to soldiers, they needed a little help to get used to life at sea.

Luckily, Largs has handy signs

“Working on an RFA after RN ships is a great change. You see things from another point of view. It's been a dream deployment for us – there's been a bit of everything.”

– Lt Vince Owen

directing them to the flight deck and loading dock (and, if they're really struggling, there are pictures of a blimp, a boat and green helicopter).

And there are helpful members of the ship's company, too. Try standing outside a door with a mug in your hand and see how long it takes for a long line of troops to grow behind you.

Joking aside, the ship's senior warfar officer, WO2 John Kelly of 17 P and Maritime Regiment, is delighted that soldiers have had the 'Largs experience'.

"Nine times out of ten, it's Royal Marines aboard – and for marines, this is bread and butter," he says.

"For the soldiers, this is something totally new – and they've enjoyed it. There were a few pale faces when they first came on, but otherwise they enjoyed the food, the accommodation and not having to march for miles."

It's not entirely surprising that the soldiers enjoyed their short stay aboard Largs Bay. She's not your typical warship (ok, she's actually auxiliary...).

She's almost brand new. She's spacious. The passageways are broad, the dining and rest areas relatively spacious. There's a first-rate gym, Satellite TV, E-mail, Internet.

There's even a first-rate hospital (yes,



mean hospital – they don't call them sick bays in the RFA).

The Bays have arguably the best hospitals in the fleet (apart from the dedicated casualty treatment facility in Argus and Ocean's impressive sickbay): two wards, a small theatre and a treatment room/office.

Thankfully, it's only the latter which is used most of the time.

"It's more of a GP's surgery – our guys are pretty healthy," said Med Tech Stuart Hamer, a former RN medical assistant.

"In 1982 I was raring to get down here as a newly-qualified medic. I never did. It's taken me 26 years to get to the Falklands. I'm over the moon to finally get here."

The medic's normally on his own in Largs' hospital, but he's been joined for some of this deployment by a Navy doctor.

"Because of the lack of ozone down here, people don't realise they can burn so much quicker," said Surg Lt Ruth Boddy. "We've actually had more sunburn cases here than in the Caribbean" (as the flaking skin on my nose testifies...).

Flaking though it might be, my nose cannot detect (thanks to a cold) what others aboard Largs can: the aroma of fish.

Down below, sighs Chief Officer (Engineering) David Wardell, "it smells like a fish market".

The reason? Krill. They seem drawn to Largs Bay. "They keep clogging the sea strainers," he explains. "But it shows they work."

That aside, the Falklands environment is actually quite good for the landing ship – the cool, fresh air means "it's actually quite pleasant in the machinery spaces".

He has been involved with the Bay class for the past eight years, from design and construction to realisation and operation.

"These ships are very good – they've got three times the capability of their predecessors," the engineer adds.

"One thing was kept in mind throughout their design – keep it simple."

'Their predecessors', the fabled Knights of the Round Table, were children of the 60s. Smaller, slower, less agile. But they did have one advantage over the Bays.

"There's only one pressure gauge in the machinery control room here," the engineer bemoans, surrounded by computer displays, rollerballs, mice and click buttons. "It's a little disconcerting. As engineers, we like to see dials."

1/O Mark Royston-Tonks, in charge of Largs' systems engineering – "the best department on the ship: we fix everything" – adds: "We like to see gauges, but you have to learn to trust the technology."

You do. Stand on Largs Bay capacious bridge and you'll be struck by the gadgetry and consoles.

You'll be struck – and, to be perfectly honest, a little disappointed – by the size of the ship's wheel (really, really small – more like a joystick on an aircraft).

And next to it you'll be struck by two dials and levers moving constantly – even at anchor. These are the controls for the stern thrusters which determine not merely Largs' speed through the water, but also her course (there is no rudder).

And they work at anchor too, maintaining the ship's position – 'hovering' if you like – so she can load/offload her troops and stores.

With the winds in Falkland Sound, they're working overtime... which is good news for the local avian population, which is particularly grateful to the thrusters churning up the water and providing them with rich pickings.

If only rustling up scran for the ship's company was that easy...

Sitting at the end of an 8,000-mile

logistical chain, it isn't easy getting fresh produce (or spare parts and other supplies for that matter...).

Largs stocked up on bacon and sausages before departing the UK ("There's nothing quite like British bangers," LH(Admin Assistant) Henry Graham points out), but there's a shortage of another, more important, taste of Blighty.

"The biggest problem is beer," 1/O John Craig, Largs' logistics and supply officer (half) jokes.

"If you have to hold official receptions – as we do – it soon gets used up and the prices down here are much higher than back in the UK."

The supply officer had been looking forward to Christmas in Key West... until the ship's programme changed and she turned south. "Key West is quiet at Christmas, but still 25 times more lively than Mare Harbour..."

Key West's loss was the Falklands' gain.

There's no doubt that the ship and local forces have made full use of the chance to work together.

"This is the first time we have had an opportunity on this scale," says range

"This is the first time we have had an opportunity on this scale. It would be nice to see Largs Bay here again."

– Marvin Clarke

officer Marvin Clarke. "It would be nice to see Largs Bay here again."

Indeed, among those who have been impressed by what Largs brings to the party is the future head of the RAF, Air Marshal Stephen Dalton.

He saw Fred, that most unfortunate of mariners, become the most unfortunate of air travellers, falling out of the back of a Lynx; luckily, he was plucked from Falkland Sound by an RAF Search and Rescue Sea King...

...And he also witnessed the climax of Cape Bayonet. "This is the epitome of the quality of the training which can be done here in the Falklands and Largs Bay has shown she is hugely capable and very effective," the air marshal said.

For Largs herself, the exercise has given the ship and her company a raft of new experiences: a first visit to the Falklands, the first substantial exercise with the Army, a chance to admire the crystal-clear waters and starkly-beautiful landscape.

"Cape Bayonet's a short exercise, but an extremely valuable one," said Capt Watts. "It's almost as if the entire island is dedicated to it."

"I think most people have learned how useful we are. These are fantastic ships to command – and there's still a lot more that they can do."

Next month: HMS Clyde and RFA Black Rover take centre stage



● Tank (right) greeted by HMS Gannet's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Bryan Nicholas, as he returned from the flight which notched up his 6,000th flying hour

Pilot's birthday greeting

CAPTAIN Eric 'Winkle' Brown is the Navy's most decorated pilot and a legend in his lifetime, so the Fleet Air Arm couldn't let his 90th birthday pass without suitable celebrations.

To mark the event on January 21, a Lynx from 702 Naval Air Squadron dropped in from RNAS Yeovilton to see him, bearing birthday gifts.

The aircraft crew, commanded by Lt Cdr Al Haigh, presented Capt Brown with a framed picture depicting various fixed and rotary wing aircraft, and a card from the Fleet Air Arm.

Capt Brown, who was the first man to land a jet aircraft on a ship at sea, was able to sit at the controls of the Lynx, a modern variant of a helicopter he once flew.

Capt Brown enjoyed an illustrious 31-year career in the Navy, which saw him serve as a fighter pilot in the Battle of Britain and later as one of the world's greatest test pilots.

He holds many world records including the most types of aircraft flown (487) and the most carrier deck landings (2,407).

He was also the first man to land a twin-engined aircraft on a



● Capt Eric 'Winkle' Brown pictured with the senior pilot of 702 Sqn, Lt Cdr Al Haigh, who presented him with a framed picture

Picture: PO(Phot) Terry Seward

carrier and the first British pilot to fly a helicopter. Two months short of his 90th birthday he travelled to the USA and flew a simulator for the Joint Strike Fighter.

Capt Brown is the Royal Navy's most decorated Fleet Air Arm pilot and holds the distinction of

having been awarded successively the MBE, OBE and CBE, together with the Distinguished Service Cross and Air Force Cross.

He has written 26 books and will be taking a leading part in the Fly Navy 100 celebrations this year.



● LA Scott Galloway

Safe in Scott's hands

LEADING Airman Scott Galloway, from HMS Illustrious, has been awarded a prestigious safety award for his contribution to flight safety.

Scott, a survival equipment specialist, received the Guild of Air Pilot and Air Navigators' Air Safety Trust Award at a ceremony on board the carrier.

To qualify for the award, Scott had to get familiar with charts and complex airspace usage, so that he could provide detailed briefs to pilots and observers before every flight.

He was working out of branch as an Aviation Briefing Officer, and was largely self-taught, winning the award without any specialist training.

Air Commodore Rick Peacock-Edwards, who was Master of the Guild until March 2009, said: "Scott has done extremely well to come to terms with what can be a demanding and unforgiving job, even for professional aviators."

"For him to have done so well without any external specialist training is something for which he and the ship can be rightly proud – it is a great achievement."

Also at the ceremony was Rear Admiral Colin Cooke-Priest who is Master-Elect of the Guild, who said: "I'm very honoured to be taking over as Master when I succeed Rick in March, particularly in the centenary year of Naval aviation."

Young Hawks get airborne delivery

THERE'S special delivery and special delivery. Usually the goods you order come through your letterbox.

But the young rugby union players with Glasgow Hawks midi team had an extra-special delivery when their new kit arrived in the back of a Sea King helicopter.

The Sea King, from HMS Gannet in Prestwick, delivered the strips in an air-drop before landing at the Anniesland fields.

The team members were presented with their new tops at half-time in front of a crowd of some 1200 fans. Once the match was over, the young players were invited to have a look around the helicopter and chat to the crew.

Now the players from Glasgow Hawks' Midi team will cut a dash in local fixtures wearing their Navy-sponsored kit.

"These players all show tremendous enthusiasm and commitment and we're delighted to be able to support them in this way," said Lt Cdr Gary Farmer, one of the RN's regional business managers in Scotland.

He added: "Teamwork, discipline and determination are key on the rugby pitch, but they are also qualities which mirror those found in the Armed Forces."

To the beat of a different drum



BAND Cpl Gary Turner is hanging up his drum sticks for a new career as an officer in the Royal Navy.

The musician has been selected for promotion and is readying himself to begin his training at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

Gary began his military music career in 1992 at the RM School of Music in Kent, and has served overseas and on board the carrier HMS Invincible.

He said: "I've been fortunate enough to travel all around the world and UK entertaining people, doing my hobby as my full time career is fabulous."

"My time in the Royal Marines has presented many challenges, both in music and working in a military role with 3 Commando Brigade, but I feel it's time now for a new direction and I'm looking forward to my training to become a Royal Navy officer."

After his initial seven-week spell at BRNC, Gary will return to Raleigh to train as a Logistics Officer at the specialist school on site.

● Band Cpl Gary Turner is saying goodbye to his drum kit

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Chileans say thanks

THE SALE of Type-23 frigates to the Chilean Navy is now complete, and to mark the occasion, the Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Navy, Admiral Rodolfo Codina Diaz, presented two RN officers with medals in recognition of their part in the project.

Cdr John Howarth and Lt Cdr Geoffrey Palmer both played an important part in the Type 23 Purchase Project, which involved a dedicated training programme.

Now that the FF Almirante Condell (formerly HMS Marlborough) has arrived in Valparaiso the sales project is complete.

Both men received the Chilean Medal of Honour in the class of Knight on the after deck of Almirante Condell, in a ceremony attended by the Chilean Defence Minister and the British Ambassador to Chile.

Top Tank

HMS GANNET, as our readers know, is the Royal Navy's busiest helicopter search and rescue station. So it's not surprising that one of its pilots has clocked up a milestone of 6,000 flying hours.

Lt Cdr Andrew 'Tank' Murray, who joined the Navy 23 years ago, passed the 6,000 hour mark earlier this year – and celebrated the occasion with a large cake.

HMS Gannet's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Bryan Nicholas, said: "This really is quite unusual and a great achievement."

"We're delighted to have been able to share this moment with him. A celebratory cake, along with a bit of a get-together, definitely seemed the order of the day for this fantastic milestone in his career."

Tank joined the Navy in 1986 and deployed to many areas of conflict around the world. He was Gannet's training officer at one time and has trained hundreds of pilots in helicopters ranging from Gazelles to Sea Kings.

Tank, who lives in Helston, Cornwall, said: "It was a great surprise and I was really honoured everyone had taken the trouble to organise the cake and a bit of a do."

"I have to say that I love my job and I've had some great fun over the years notching up that 6,000 hours. Obviously there have been some tough, challenging flights, but being able to rescue people or make a difference in areas of conflict is very satisfying."

He added: "I wouldn't change it for the world and look forward to getting yet more hours under my belt."

Cold friends reunited

FORMER PO Chef Jan Davey had a blast from the past when he met the Naval Regional Commander for Wales and the West of England.

Jan, from HMS Flying Fox, in Bristol, explained: "Twenty odd years ago, two of Her Majesty's grey funnel cruise ships were traversing the waters between the Falkland Islands and Argentina, when catastrophe fell upon them."

"One ship, Coventry, sustained fatal damage and sank. Luckily for her the other ship was ours, HMS Broadsword, and we were on hand to pick up survivors."

He went on: "I was a petty officer in charge of the forward first-aid party and busy with survivors coming on board. In all the chaos going on around, amongst all the frozen and injured, one person stood out because he had survived the sinking of his ship and then his life raft."

"The extreme cold had taken effect, and he had to be placed in the captain's bath for his wellbeing."

The survivor was none other than Jamie Miller, now a Commodore, but at the time officer of the watch and interpreter onboard Coventry. He went on to serve in Danae, Dryad, Avenger, Ark Royal, Marlborough, and HMY Britannia, and was Commander Amphibious Task Group in Fearless, Illustrious, Ocean, and again in Ark Royal in the 2003 Gulf War.

Jan, meanwhile, went on to serve at HMS Heron, Sirius and Drake, before being discharged in 1986. For the last 13 years he has been employed as an MDPGA manager. He also works for the Sea Cadets and believes he may well be the oldest PO Chef in the country.

He said: "Four years ago, the Naval Regional Commander for our region retired and a new one was appointed. Guess who? Yes, we have now gone full circle. He is Commodore Jamie Miller, the Naval Regional Commander, whose Broad Pennant now flies at HMS Flying Fox."

"Small world, isn't it?" asked Jan, adding: "Even now, I am giving him assistance by organising his early call in the mornings!"



Sight for Soar eyes

FRIENDS were reunited at Chatham when the submarine Ocelot, now preserved as a museum piece, was visited by her old commanding officer, Vice Admiral Trevor Soar (pictured standing on the left).

The admiral made an unofficial visit to the Historic Dockyard in Chatham to show his office team around the submarine which was his first command, from 1986 until 1990.

During this time, the boat was deployed to the South Atlantic, Pacific and the Caribbean. Among his other commands, he also took charge of HMS Chatham in 1996 and in 1997 took her into her namesake port for a visit.

Vice Admiral Soar said: "I have a long-standing relationship with Chatham going back to the late 1970s and hold very fond memories of Ocelot as not only was she my first command but when she arrived in Chatham to be preserved, I assisted the team with her interpretation."

He added: "It was good to see some old friends here today and I am pleased to see the Historic Dockyard doing so well. I will certainly be giving it my support wherever I can in my next position as Commander-in-Chief Fleet when I take over in June."

No sibling rivalry at Raleigh

PASSING-OUT parades have always been a family affair at HMS Raleigh, but it's not every day you get brothers and sisters on the same parade.

It's happened twice already this year, with two pairs of siblings training in the same division.

First to march off together were Daniel and Gina Maloney, from Wigan, who are both trainee Warfare Specialists. In their case it was even more of a family affair as they were following in the footsteps of big brother Lee, 26, who's now a Petty Officer in HMS Kent.

Lee was there, with parents Carol and Neil, to see his kid brother and sister pass out.

Gina, 16, was due to join up in January, but then a letter arrived bringing her date forward and putting her on the same course as Daniel.

Gina said: "Daniel opened the letter and I thought he was joking at first. I was really pleased to be joining on the same day as him, because I have to admit I was a bit nervous about joining up on my own."

"We didn't want to rely on each other too much during training, but it definitely helped having a familiar face around, particularly in the first few weeks."

Although in different classes, the two of them trained side-by-side and admitted to some good-natured competition.

Daniel said: "There's always been a bit of sibling rivalry between us and it's continued here, but we've also been egging each other to do the best that we can."

He added: "The training has been great. We are really proud to be completing the course with all the friends we have made."

Daniel and Gina are now at HMS Collingwood, learning how to gather and interpret information about a ship's surroundings, as well as operating the weapons and defensive systems.

The next brother and sister combo were Air Engineering Technicians David Chapman and Katherine Batten, from Arbroath. David has his little sister to thank for his blossoming naval career – for it was Katherine who marched him down to the careers office.

Katherine, 22, who previously worked as an artist, was the one who had the brainwave of a Naval career.

She said: "I wanted to join because of the fantastic career prospects, the chance to travel all over the world and for the job security."

Gannet drops in

SCHOOLKIDS in Belfast were delighted when a helicopter from HMS Gannet made a flying visit to their primary school.

The helicopter and crew swooped in to Strandtown Primary School and spent an hour and a half talking to the pupils and showing them round the Sea King, which had flown from its base in Prestwick.

The visit was part of an initiative to raise awareness of the Fleet Air Arm, which celebrates its centenary this year with a series of celebrations and events.



● Gina and Daniel Maloney preparing for their passing-out parade



● Trainee Air Engineering Technicians David Chapman and Katherine Batten, who is holding the Owen Cup, presented to her as top recruit, at HMS Raleigh

Pictures: Dave Sheffield

"David saw all the leaflets around the house. I became like a recruiting officer and eventually dragged him into the careers office."

Katherine, who is married to Andrew Batten, won the Owen Cup at Raleigh for the best recruit.

She said: "This course has been one of the most challenging experiences of my life and I've enjoyed every minute of it."

David, 23, who had worked as a swimming instructor and lifeguard, said: "I fancied a challenge and working with the aircraft looks really interesting."

He added: "Although Katherine and I have been in the same division throughout we've been in different classes. Some things

we've done together and at other times our classes have trained separately."

"Overall it's been really good to have each other close by."

The brother and sister will now head to HMS Sultan, in Gosport, for the specialist phase of their training.

Public Relations Manager at HMS Raleigh Nicki Dunwell said: "Although we often have brothers and sisters on different courses, it's quite rare that they pass out together, but it seems to be a trend this year."

She added: "They usually train in separate classes if they're in the same division, so they have a friendly face around, but without vying with each other in class all the time."



● L-R Holly Wilson, Luke Niblock, Karli Gibson (all from Strandtown) with Lt Cdr 'Florence' Ford

Picture: Mike O'Neill

Ibrox rocks

HMS CALEDONIA'S Master-at-Arms MAA David Saunders had a surprise send-off from his colleagues after 27 years of outstanding service.

As a lifelong supporter of Glasgow Rangers, his Caledonia shipmates arranged for him to tour Ibrox stadium, then meet Rangers' legend Ally McCoist, and be presented with a signed and framed Rangers' football strip featuring his name and time served.

David said: "It was a wonderful surprise. The first I knew of it was when we neared the gates of Ibrox. Even my wife and kids managed to keep the secret. I thought I was turning up with them to be presented with a Quaich [a Scottish drinking cup] by the commanding officer of Caledonia, and have some photographs taken at the base."

"Receiving my signed football top from Ally McCoist was the icing on the cake and he couldn't have been friendlier."

His CO Cdr Peter Adams said: "We were really keen to do something special to mark his leaving the Navy."

"He's a bit of a special character and will be sorely missed by all of us at HMS Caledonia."

The officer credited all the hard work with the arrangements to PO 'Mal' Malcolm and MAA Stuart Campbell.



Julie keeps up standards

FOR the first time RNAS Culdrose has a female Base Warrant Officer in the personage of Julie Wilde.

As with any senior rate appointed to the post – male or female, she will advise the Commanding Officer on matters affecting the welfare and morale of the men and women who serve at Culdrose.

Base Warrant Officers (BWOs) are responsible for maintaining military standards amongst serving personnel. As a badge of office they carry a smart silver-topped cane to alert everyone of their presence.

In her appointment as BWO, Warrant Officer Wilde assumes the mantle of senior Warrant

Officer at Culdrose and is also the President of the Warrant Officers' and Senior Rates' Mess.

Julie Wilde joined the Navy in 1980 and trained at HMS Mercury, near Portsmouth, as a Radio Operator. She went on to see service in various overseas Communication Centres including the Falklands Islands.

She was promoted to Warrant Officer in 2000 and earmarked for a variety of training appointments culminating in the post of Training Warrant Officer responsible for the duty of care of naval personnel at RNAS Culdrose.

She is married to Neil and lives near Helston in Cornwall.



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US-UK get their hands dirty

TWENTY trainee sailors from HMS Raleigh were joined by an equal force of US Navy personnel from the Joint Maritime Facility at RAF St Mawgan to clear vegetation, build fences, and do other rather messy jobs around Vitalise Churchtown Centre.

This was the fourth year that the Brits and Yanks joined forces to clear up the 12-acre site in Lanlivery that provides breaks for disabled people and their carers.

The annual DIY work day also saw the multinational sailors (pictured above by Dave Sherfield) put to work building new compost bays and power-washing buildings and vehicles.

Capt Jonathan Woodcock, the commanding officer of HMS Raleigh, said: "The trainees thoroughly enjoy their time at the centre. It gives them the opportunity to use the teamworking

skills they learn during their basic training in a different context, while also helping out a very worthwhile cause."

The head of the Joint Maritime Facility, Capt John Jones said: "I am delighted that the US Navy and colleagues at the Joint Maritime Facility have been able to help."

"My sailors participate in a number of community relations activities across Cornwall each year – but Churchtown is a very special project as it allows us to join with trainees from HMS Raleigh in a truly unique US-UK initiative, and work together to help this very worthwhile charity."

Further information about the Churchtown Centre can be found at www.vitalise.org.uk.

■ A collection at Raleigh before Christmas raised £742.33 for the centre.

Bandies on bikes

ROYAL Marine musicians from the Royal Marine Band in HMS Nelson will be pedalling their way across the south coast from Deal to Torpoint in memory of two of their colleagues.

The places chosen reflect the two men: Major John Kelly, a former Director of Music, came from Deal and Cpl Andy Thomson, a French horn player, lived in Torpoint.

A core team of 14 riders will be cycling every day of the five day event in May, with guest riders from the Band Service and the families joining on occasion.

Three charities will benefit from the riders' efforts, two of which have been chosen by the widows: St Luke's Hospice in Plymouth, Deal Memorial Bandstand, and the RM Benevolent Fund.

WO2 Lee Cullen said: "With our guys out in Afghanistan at the moment, we thought these charities were highly appropriate."

The Bandies are also holding a charity auction in Portsmouth while all the RM Bands are gathered there to prepare for the Beat Retreat in Horse Guards Parade in June.

Find out more at www.bandiesonbikes.co.uk

The rigours of the beauty frontline

FOR many women, waxing is a normal part of their beauty routine; for many men, it's something that they have to be rewarded to endure...

Fortunately 30 men from the Royal Marines, Royal Navy, RAF, Army, police force and fire services were brave enough to put themselves on the beautician's front line to have their legs waxed and raise over £4,000 for Help for Heroes.

One brave Royal Marine Reservist had his entire body waxed for the cause, which is an eye-watering thought for anyone who has ever experienced the sensation.

The fundraising event took place at Bristol's RNR Unit, HMS Flying Fox, organised by former Reservist Liz Farrell, and attended by Bristol's Lord Lieutenant Mrs Mary Prior who watched the men suffer their fate.

Liz, who spent much of her service working in hospitals providing medical cover to the Marines, said: "The night was an enormous success. Not only was it great entertainment for all involved, it was a great opportunity to raise money."

"Help for Heroes provides invaluable assistance to its thousands of servicemen and women, and our Reservists were keen to show their support for a cause that benefits so many friends and colleagues."

The former petty officer added: "Over the course of my career I have been fortunate to meet some really fantastic people, and I believe it is important to give something back."

The evening included a charity raffle and fundraising bazaar, which garnered more than £500 of the total raised.

If you want to show your support, go to www.justgiving.com/elizabethfarrell1, or about the Reserve forces at wessexrfca.co.uk.

A sailor's best friend

THEY say that every dog has his day. Well, Endal has had a few days in the limelight, and that will only increase with a documentary on Sky Real Lives this month and the publication of a new book *Endal: How One Extraordinary Dog Brought a Family back from the Brink*.

For those who don't already know about Endal, he is the canine companion of Allen Parton. Allen was serving in the Gulf in 1991 as a chief petty officer when he was involved in a road traffic accident.

Left in a coma for several months, Allen woke up without the use of both legs and with no memories of his wife or children.

Allen's brain injury left him confused and bewildered, unable to return to the Naval service and struggling to come to terms with what had happened to him.

His wife Sandra was a nurse so thought that she could deal with her husband's serious injuries, but the man who came home to her was very different to the man who had gone away.

But by chance Allen came across Endal, and man and dog bonded – the Labrador assistance dog helped Allen regain his independence.

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust (RNBT) became involved with the Parton family in 1993, assisting with living expenses and help for the family to move to a house better suited to Allen's needs.

The RNBT also helped in the purchase of a powered wheelchair to allow Allen to take Endal for regular exercise and off-road walks; and a smaller wheelchair for daily use.

Allen said: "Without the support of the RNBT, I'd be unable to take my best friend out for walks. I can't thank the Trust

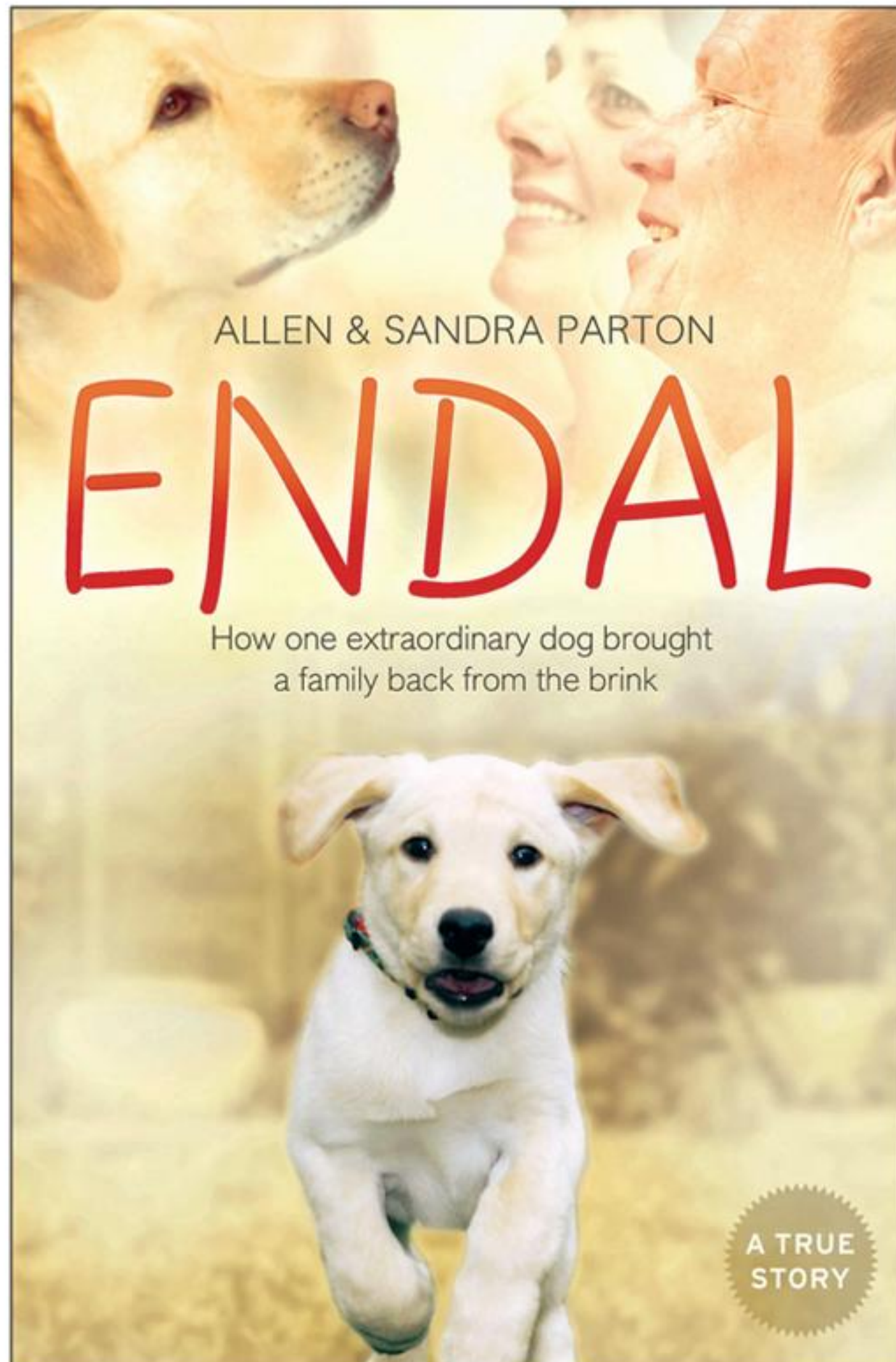
enough; they have been a lifeline for me and my family."

If you would like to support the RNBT or find out if they can help you, visit www.rnbt.org.uk or call 023 9269 0112.

The Dog that Saved our Marriage

is due to be shown on Sky Real Lives in March 12 at 9pm.

And the book *Endal – How One Extraordinary Dog Brought a Family Back from the Brink* was published by HarperTrue in early February, priced £6.99.



If you are feeling a little peaky...

SEAFARERS UK are challenging the Navy to take back a charity title from the Army.

The Seafarers 24-Peaks Challenge takes place in July in the Lake District, but at the moment the Forces record is held by an Army team and Seafarers would like to see a Navy team challenge for the title.

Previous participant Lt Alan Ainsworth recommends the event to his matelot allies: "Organisation of the event by Seafarers UK and Global Challenge staff was absolutely fantastic – everything I expected and then some."

Each team of six people is asked to raise £5,000, tasked to climb 24 peaks over 2,400ft in 24 hours

over July 18-19.

As Seafarers UK is Britain's leading charity helping people from the RN, RM, Merchant Navy and fishing fleets, perhaps you can find a team to put the maritime services back on top?

Find out more at www.seafarers-uk.org, or call 020 7932 5961.

Matt tackles the Bath Half

ASPIRING Royal Marine officer Matthew Barnes will be running the Bath Half Marathon this month for two RM charities: the Royal Marines Benevolent Fund and the Royal Marines 1939 War Fund.

The 23-year-old runner, who is awaiting a date for his Potential Officers' Course, will be carrying a 40lb weighted vest over the distance.

He said: "Regardless of my own ambitions with the Corps, I have developed a deep and humble respect for the Royal Marines and the daily sacrifices they make. And I feel privileged to be able to help their charities in this way."

"The weighted vest I will wear is not only a mark of respect to the Corps, but also an important symbol of the crucial light infantry role of the Commandos."

Pledge your support at www.justgiving.com/matthewbarnes2.

...and Keith races on the ice

FORMER Naval man Keith Flood begins his toughest challenge yet this month when he sets out on the 6633 Ultra, a 350-mile non-stop unsupported footrace across the Arctic Circle.

The ex Naval PTI has just eight days to complete the journey from Eagle Plains, Yukon, to Tuktoyaktuk in north-west Canada, dragging a sled with all his equipment and food through the challenges of a hostile winter, thin ice, snow storms and unexpected wildlife.

Keith is hoping to raise £75,000 for the National Society for Epilepsy (NSE); more than double the impressive total he raised in 2007 when he tackled the diametrically different Marathon de Sables, a six-day race across the Sahara desert.

If you would like to show your support, visit www.justgiving.com/yukon-ultra.

Find out more about the Naval man's favoured charity at www.epilepsynse.org.uk.

Bulwark becomes a Heroes ship

ASSAULT ship HMS Bulwark sent its support when Durham County Council chairman Len O'Donnell urged people not to limit their support for the UK's Armed Forces to the RBL's Poppy Appeal.

The councillor was speaking after presenting a cheque for £4,000 to Help for Heroes, saying: "Until fairly recently, people could be forgiven for thinking that the only reminder we get of the service and sacrifice of our boys and girls, men and women in the Armed Services was through the annual Poppy Day Appeal."

"But that's no longer the case. Sadly our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan has given us an almost daily reminder of the deadly risks which can be involved in joining up and serving our Queen and country."

"People today are often criticised for being cynical, uncharitable and unsympathetic towards our Armed Services."

"But a new organisation – Help for Heroes – was launched which proved the critics wrong and showed that the British people really do care and have a great pride in what our Service men and women do."

Bulwark's commanding officer, Capt Wayne Keble, sent a message of support to the council, stating why this appeal was particularly relevant to Durham's adopted ship:

"Firstly, and this fact is not well known, the Royal Navy is currently the largest supplier of Service personnel to Afghanistan and Iraq."

"Secondly, we have suffered the loss of Royal Marines from HMS Bulwark in those troubled areas."

"And finally, and of particular joy to us, HMS Bulwark has been described as Help for Heroes' favourite ship."

"Indeed so close has our relationship with Help for Heroes become that we have been asked to become a 'patron'."

He concluded: "It is a tremendous honour for Bulwark – County Durham's ship – to become the first military unit to be accorded such a distinction."

Bonded for bereaved children

THE Royal Navy and Marines Children's Fund has joined forces with Winston's Wish to allow bereaved children from Naval and Marine families access to the charity's services.

It means that if a family comes to the RNMCF in need of bereavement counselling services then the Fund will pay for Winston's Wish to provide these, with no limit on funding.

The new partnership offers support to Navy and Marine children bereaved through deaths in combat, or through any other cause.

"There is urgent work to be done with children from Naval and Royal Marine families who have lost a parent," said Clare Scherer from Winston's Wish.

"The death of a parent can be one of the most fundamental losses a child will ever face. We have the tools and coping strategies to help young people live with their grief and face the future with confidence and hope."

Winston's Wish is the leading childhood bereavement charity and the largest provider of services to bereaved children, young people and their families.

■ Helpline: 0845 2 03 04 05



A day at Alder Hey

MEMBERS of HMS Ark Royal's ship's company headed over to Alder Hey Children's Hospital when their ship was in Liverpool to deliver gifts and talk to children and their families.

The ship's company collected over £400 to buy gifts, which was further bolstered by a donation of £100 from the John Lewis toy department.

The sailors (pictured left by LAFot Gregg Macready) visited four wards and talked to families and children of all ages.

The sailors in their smart uniform brought smiles to many faces, but even more so the ship's chaplain Rev Richard Ellingham who demonstrated some sleight of hand with his magic tricks.

Irene Axon from the hospital's

Imagine charity said: "Although Alder Hey is NHS funded, we rely on gifts and visits from organisations like the Royal Navy to raise awareness of the hospital."

"It is also fabulous for the children and their families. We are so grateful to have Ark Royal visit us and we hope that the Royal Navy returns again soon."

Alder Hey treats over 200,000 children a year, and is one of the largest and busiest children's hospitals in Europe. Imagine is the Alder Hey charity, a fundraising initiative that supports the work of the hospital in terms of research and buying medical equipment.

Find out more at www.imagineappeal.com



● The Prince's Trust team on the low ropes course at BRNC

A Princely endeavour

A GLIMPSE inside Naval life was offered to youngsters in the Prince's Trust at the Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth.

Officers Lt 'Nobby' Clark and Lt 'Tanzy' Lees from HMS Collingwood joined youngsters on the 12-week course in week ten, which was dedicated to raising funds for another community project of their choice.

Some of these money-making schemes are well known to Naval folks – car washing in fancy dress, raffle-ticket sales, even bag packing in a local supermarket.

The latter part of the week saw the Naval officers introduce the Prince's Trust volunteers to RN training at Britannia, where they were put through their paces on the low ropes course, and took up the challenge of a gig race on the River Dart.

Seamanship was further put to the test when they took charge of a picket boat, and competitive teamwork came back to the fore with a five-a-side football workout

at the end of the week.

The Prince's Trust team so enjoyed their experiences with the Naval officers that three of them have even expressed an interest in a future military career.

A riches of Richmond

A SAILOR has set out to run from Richmond to Richmond and back to Richmond on Richmond...

However CPOWEA Dave Hamlyn (something of a shame he's not called Rich...) will be finding the view somewhat monotonous.

The senior rate is running the distance from Richmond in Surrey to Richmond in North Yorkshire and back again (some 600 miles) on board HMS Richmond on station in the Gulf.

And all in aid of the ship's charity Help for Heroes. If you would like to follow his efforts, Dave is keeping a blog at www.davedoesrichmond.blogspot.com. And you can pledge your support by writing to him at: HMS Richmond, BFPO 375.

Life outside

A NEW housing scheme for ex-Service personnel has opened up in Plymouth, courtesy of Alabare Christian Care Centres.

Supported by funding from the Royal British Legion, the new scheme will provide supported housing with advice to people who are struggling with life outside the military.

Find out more by calling 01722 322882 or visiting www.alabare.co.uk.

Solo cycle eases Stress

THE SON of a former Naval man is setting out on a two-year mission to cycle around the world, raising money for Combat Stress.

Kevin, whose father LMEM Wayne Shannon served from 1977-89, plans to pedal across Europe, into Russia and Siberia, down through Asia, to Australia then to South America and north to the USA.

Kevin sets off this summer, and his training and progress can be followed at www.becauseitisthere.co.uk.



● AB Fiona Emblem, AB Natalie Harbord and PO Andy Craigie run for Help for Heroes
Picture: LAFot Hamish Burke

Scottish runners for H4H

A GRUELLING 24-hour run took place on running machines at Clyde Naval Base to raise £1,100 for Help for Heroes.

The six runners – PO Andy Craigie, LPT Michael Preston, AB Fiona Emblem, AB Richard Perkins, AB Natalie Harbord and Mne Rob Le Core RM – each took up their place on the treadmill in hour-long shifts while colleagues collected from passers-by on their way to the nearby Spar shop.

"They really went all out for the event and gave it their all," said base physical training instructor LPT Richard Collins.

Propellor versus pedal

WHICH is faster? Three matelots on their pushbikes or one plastic minehunter?

Well, the ship's company of HMS Walney put that to the test when Leading Divers Marcus O'Toole, Rod MacKenzie and AB(MW) Andy Pither set off from Clyde Naval Base to cover the 230 miles to Barrow-in-Furness on their bikes.

Walney's CO Lt Cdr Tim Green waved the starting flag for the cyclists before rushing off to his bridge to set his ship underway on its own journey to Barrow.

The cyclists admitted that they had the privilege of passing through the Lake District, some of the most beautiful countryside in the UK, but for them it was something of a long uphill slog.

PO(MW) Lee Dumbleton was on hand to support the cyclists – although somehow managed to disappear when LD O'Toole discovered he had a puncture...

Despite their best efforts, the minehunter beat the cyclists by two hours 43 minutes.

Their challenge raised £477.01 for the Children's Specialist Unit within Furness Hospital.

Lt Cdr Green said: "It really was a sterling effort by the cyclists. They not only raised funds for our affiliated charity, but also helped raise the profile of the Royal Navy during our successful visit to our affiliated port of Barrow-in-Furness."

Pilgrims play for Armed Forces

PLYMOUTH Argyle FC are celebrating Armed Forces Day a little in advance of the official celebrations on June 27.

The Pilgrims' home game against Burnley on Saturday March 21 is their official mark of respect to the city's Service personnel, where military people and their families will be able to buy discounted tickets for the match.

There'll be a military theme with Royal Marines delivering the ball to the referee for the start of the event in their usual dramatic style.

Supporters with green beret aspirations will be able to test their mettle against a climbing wall and arctic simulator outside the ground, and be welcomed into the stadium by the sound of a Royal Marine Volunteer Band.

Cdr Malcolm Pollock of HMS Drake said: "A lot of Service personnel live in the south-west. Many of them are serving overseas in places such as Afghanistan, Iraq, or in ships and submarines."

"It is great therefore that our local football club has – in recognition of their work – put on this Armed Forces Day."

Ticket details: £15 adults; £5 children; £10 over 65s/under 23s.

Collingwood puts charity to the fore

AS EVER, those kindhearted folk at HMS Collingwood have been putting their efforts into fundraising and worthy deeds for good causes.

Phase 2 sailors (pictured right) headed out to Alverstoke Junior School in Gosport to carry out general DIY and grounds maintenance: topping a footpath with raw woodchip, clearing a hedge-row, repairing a broken fence.

Suzi Hoskins from the school said: "I'm impressed with their hard work and dedication; they have achieved more than was actually asked of them."

Other local schools have benefitted from Collingwood's muscle power in recent months: other Phase 2 trainees went to Ranvilles School in Fareham to help with the annual tree-planting, digging holes, and putting in the trees and support posts; and Bright Sparks Pre-School in Titchfield received a donation of £1,500 from the Senior Rates Mess to purchase new IT equipment.

Naval officers on the System Engineering Management course also showed off their muscle when they went to Sarisbury Green Community Association to demolish an old building and level the ground in preparation for the arrival of two containers and a storage shed.

Centre manager Jacki Jackson said: "I've been trying for two years to get help to demolish this – anyone who did come along stated that it was too big a job."

"But these sailors are brilliant, they've been working so hard. We



can't really put into words what this means to us."

Another charity windfall from Collingwood came courtesy of the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess who handed over a cheque for £1,500 to the RNLI, their sponsored mess charity for last season.

The results of Collingwood's November firework display have been handed over to Help for Heroes.

The annual event was free to all Service personnel and Collingwood employees, but a charitable donation garnered a total of £1,063.15 for the charity that helps injured Service men and women.

Lt John Brennan said: "I was only expecting a few hundred pounds and was shocked to

discover that the final total was over the £1,000 mark."

Other seasonal offerings included the Collingwood Hamper Appeal which saw a wealth of food and goods donated for the local elderly and underprivileged.

Organiser Emma Dunbar said: "Because of the credit crunch, I wasn't expecting to receive so many products and I have been totally overwhelmed by all the support."

"Sailors and civilians have really shone through for the underprivileged in our local community who would otherwise have faced a darker Christmas."

And Collingwood's Chaplaincy bolstered the Christian Aid Harvest Appeal with the sales of spicy carrot and lentil soup raising £82.30 for the charity.

A polar bear babe

THE POLAR Challenge is a 320-nauticalmile race to the Magnetic North Pole, and Royal Marines are helping one Research Scientist complete the challenge in aid of Help for Heroes.

Dr Leanne Franklin-Smith is a climate change scientist who admits that although she has journeyed north of the Arctic circle many times, she's never over-wintered, skied or spent long periods of time overwintering in a tent out there.

So naturally step forward the Royal Marines with their particular expertise in cold weather survival.

Marine Jono Hill from the Commando Helicopter Force has been helping Leanne (nicknamed the Bear Babe due to her interests and a white woolly fleece) improve her fitness levels.

He said: "She has made tremendous progress since she accepted this extremely challenging event."

"Her fitness regime has presented some

unexpected physical and mental challenges but she has tackled each with true grit and determination.

"Having served in Afghanistan and been injured by enemy fire, I feel extremely proud to be associated with Leanne's efforts for Help for Heroes, and wish her all the best for what she is striving to accomplish."

He added: "She has a tough challenge ahead, but I am confident she has the determination and drive to achieve her worthy goal."

Former Royal Marine Sgt Parris Dugan added: "Arctic expeditions, more importantly than physical fitness, hinge on mental endurance and Leanne definitely has the strength of character and positive attitude to take on the challenge. The risks she will face and the conditions that she will have to survive in are not to be underestimated."

Find out more about the scientist's challenge at www.bearbabe.co.uk.



It's a tight squeeze

I WAS interested to see the article *Time to do 1's Duty* (February).

The reaction to *Combat 95s* may be 'soldier' but the reaction to the current JR No.3s is often 'civilian security guard'.

Whatever happened to traditional half-blues with a white front, or even (dare I say it) No. 2s?

— Bryan Moseley, Great Missenden, Bucks

...AS AN RNR senior rate I certainly do have the continued right to wear my uniform.

This was as per BR 60; RNR Regulations page 11.9 section 1122.7 which states: "On state and other occasions of ceremony within the British Commonwealth, senior ratings with at least nine years' service who are no longer serving have discretion to wear the uniform of their respective rates under the conditions given in paragraph 1102.4."

Paragraph 1102.4 says "Unless the Ministry of Defence (Navy) orders otherwise."

Unfortunately the unwritten proviso is that you have to be slim enough to get into a uniform issued many years ago, when you were presumably still young, fit, and good-looking.

— Brian J Bloom, ex CPO OPS HQ RNR

Support Explosion while you can

DUE to recent budget cuts by its governing body Explosion – The Museum of Naval Firepower, is under threat of closure to the public.

This museum, with its collection of artefacts and archives depicting naval armament from the days of Trafalgar to the present day, is situated in the former Royal Naval Armament Depot, Priddy's Hard, in Gosport and contains some unique items not found in any other museum in the world.

The knowledge of its staff and its resources have been used by military historians, serving naval personnel and visiting families around the country and has been featured in countless TV documentaries and books.

I would like to draw the attention of readers of the *Navy News* to the threat to the collection if the museum closes to the public.

I am calling on those who do not wish to see the collection broken up or lost, thereby removing the possibility of future generations to learn about this important element of Royal Navy history, to show their interest by visiting the museum before April 2009, or by contacting Gosport Borough Council.

The history of Britain is intimately tied with the history of the Royal Navy; please support your naval heritage.

— Bob Douglas, London

Fly the Fly Navy flag

THE ROYAL Navy's Historic Flight, based at RNAS Yeovilton, maintains and operates *Swordfish*, *Sea Fury* and *Sea Hawk* aircraft.

Unlike the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, money to fund their operation is raised by the Fly Navy Heritage Trust, which is a registered charity.

The flight has a merchandising trailer, kindly donated by Agusta Westland, with a small team of volunteers who attend air shows and other appropriate events to raise additional funds for the flight and to fly the flag for naval aviation in general.

We desperately need more people as the current, limited number makes it impossible to make the most of every opportunity we have to raise money for the flight and promote *Fly Navy*.

If you fancy free weekends away telling people how important air power from the sea is, please get in touch with Alan Cole on 07912 038399 or by email at a.cole757@btinternet.com or get in touch with the flight direct via our website www.royalnavyhistoricflight.org.uk/home

— Alan Cole, Queen Camel, Somerset

Ticked off over loch

I FEEL that I have to take you to task over the article 'Diving with altitude' (*Navy News*, February).

You state that Loch Laggan is the largest fresh-water lake in the United Kingdom.

This honour belongs to Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland – 16 miles by 11, compared to Loch Laggan's 7 miles by 1½.

There are several far larger bodies of fresh water in Scotland and Loch Laggan is definitely not in the premier league!

One further point of interest, Loch Laggan has been enlarged to provide a reservoir as part of the Lochaber aluminium works system.

As such, its surface height above sea level varies according to the demands of the Fort William smelter (hence the prominent 'beach' at the head of the loch).

One other sensitive point with us Scots – there are only two 'lakes' in Scotland (the well-known lake of Mentieth and the tiny Lake of Dupplin). All the others are lochs.

Hope this puts the record straight!

— Janet Palser, Birmingham

Gloucester's role in Desert Storm

YOUR report on the retirement of Rear Admiral Wilcocks (December) has some errors, primarily concerning HMS Gloucester's role in Operation Desert Storm.

To be accurate, the Gloucester's *Lynx* aircraft sank five ships, whilst operating under tactical control of either the RAF or the United States Navy, characteristically in excess of 120 miles away from the Gloucester.

In this regard the ship itself was acting only as a communications link, and provider of maintenance and hotel services to the helicopter and its crew.



● A Fairey Swordfish Mk I from the Torpedo Training Unit at Gosport drops a practice torpedo during training. [Imperial War Museum negative number MH 000023] This is one of the many images released by the Royal Navy for use as part of this year's centenary celebrations of Naval aviation, which begins from that pioneering decision in May 1909 to order the first airship and begin a programme that would see the military take to the skies.



● AB(WS) Kayleigh Paddison relaxing in the Junior Rates accommodation on board HMS Daring

Daring to look back

AFTER viewing an incredible tour of HMS Daring on BBC News I harked back to the days when I served on the destroyers HMS Punjabi and HMS Quorn in World War 2.

I was particularly impressed with the living conditions aboard Daring, comparing the crew's sleeping quarters to the hammocks we used to sling on those ships of long ago.

I was also interested in the article (February) about the memorial for the victims of the sinking of HMS Penelope.

The participants in that ceremony might be interested to learn that the captain of HMS Punjabi, which sank in a collision with the battleship King George V on May 1 1942, died on Penelope. His name was the Hon William Waldegrave.

I would like to hear from any survivors of Penelope who knew him. My email is kipper@cox.net.

— Kenneth A Tipper, Ocala, Florida



Floored by odd words

IN YOUR article *Engines swapped via Galley* (February) about the removal of the diesel engine from HMS Argyll you report that: "sections of the galley floor and ceiling had to be removed".

Floor? Ceiling? In my day it was deck and deckhead. Oh dear, what's happened in the Andrew?

— C B Bramzell, ex-Leading Wireman, MS 1942-46, (HMS Perilia and Pelorus) Hunstanton, Norfolk

...WHEN did the RN stop using the words deck and deckhead and start using floor and ceiling?

— John Meharg (ex-POMEM(M)) HMS Fearless 1983, Aslockton, Nottingham

...I WAS horrified to read that the galley 'floor' and 'ceiling' had to be removed. As this is a ship should not the article refer to the deck and deckhead?

I think that someone should receive ten lashes with a wet noodle.

— P Fane, Saanichiton, British Columbia, Canada

Consider it done – Ed

Time delay for Ark

HAVING just finished reading the January edition I was disappointed to read in *The Time of Your Lives* that a Sea King from HMS Ark Royal rescued 18 refugees in the South China Seas in January 1989 whilst on Outback 88.

You may have had a reason for writing this but the fact is it happened five months earlier, in the August of 1988.

This I know because I was a Leading Seaman (Radar) onboard the Ark Royal at this time.

No doubt I will not be the only member of the ship's company of that time to notice this error.

— Alan Bateson, ex-Leading Seaman Radar, HMS Ark Royal

Time of your Lives reflects the issue of Navy News which reports the story. It is only in recent years that emails, internet communication and the like have brought instant and inexpensive communication with ships' activities around the world.

Then, and unfortunately still occasionally now, ships would return from long stints at sea and hand over one long report on the whole deployment, resulting in stories often being many months behind the event.

Even now, due to our print deadlines, if something happens in late August, the earliest it can appear in our pages is our October issue. Thankfully our website is updated daily for all the latest news www.navynews.co.uk – Ed.

Did Rudolph go bang?

SEEING the picture of the reindeer on your letters page (February) brought back a story told to us by the canteen manager over a beer in the mess.

He was on the Russian Convoys, on a cruiser whose name escapes me. They, like HMS Kent, were given a reindeer in Murmansk to bring home with them.

He said it was stabled in the after-galley which was not being used, however after setting off to return to the UK someone asked him what the reindeer was to be fed on.

Oh dear, nothing had been bought on board to feed him with, that is until someone came up with the idea of dehydrated cabbage, which was plentiful.

So it was fed to him dry and he ate well. One of the sinks had been filled with water, which he drank.

The effect with the cabbage was so rapid he exploded in the galley.

We all fell about laughing but the manager got very upset about it, he was a very serious man, so we were not sure if he was having a laugh on us.

Is this a true story? Does anybody remember?

— Len Sherwood, Folkestone, Kent

opinion

BEING paid to go skiing, mountain biking or canoeing has always seemed like a nice perk of Service life to those outside.

But there is a purpose beyond the enjoyment. The Forces have long realised the value of sport and Adventurous Training in building fitness and teamwork – not to mention mental resolve and the will to win.

Many people join up because they enjoy the unrivalled facilities and opportunities for sport and Adventurous Training which Service life offers.

But the Forces are recruiting from a society where the overweight number two-thirds of the population (and rising fast) and where many schools are actively discouraging

competitive sports.

The Navy has quite a hill to climb in reaching its aim of a service in which everyone is 'fit to fight – fit for life'.

One of its challenges will be persuading its people that fitness for servicemen and women should be a way of life, not just a bit of last-minute training to pass the annual fitness test.

Another will be getting rid of the idea that Adventurous Training is an indulgence.

As Capt Mike Farrage, the first Director of Naval Physical Development, says: "We want people to realise that it's time for Adventurous Training and sport, and not 'time off'."



Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH

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CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUGS



LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.

Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



'Arking back

THE PULL-OUT supplement on HMS Ark Royal brought back some old memories.

I joined her in 1955 as an acting Sub Lt (E) and served on board for the first year of her commission.

I then had another bite of the cherry in 1965, serving some time on the flight deck as one of the FDEOs (Badgers, to those who might remember)

I still have some copies of *Noah's News* from 1955 to 1956, which give a good insight into what life was like at the time.

However, Ark Royal was not my only carrier and I also did commissions on board Centaur, Bulwark and Hermes in the heyday of angled decks and steam catapults, with all the excitement and tension on the flightdeck that is hard to match these days.

— J R M Hinsley, Ness, Merseyside

...THANKS for a splendid cutaway but I think the item 8 the CRBFD is not a Control Range Blind Fire Director but a Close Range Blind Fire Director as fitted on many ships including the previous HMS Daring.

— C J Pantrey, ex-REA1

...I WAS really pleased and impressed to see the magnificent and long-overdue *Inside Ark Royal IV*.

Being an ex-steamie (Chief of X Unit November 1975 – September 1976) I set about looking through to see how much I could remember about the dear old lady, when I noticed a gaffe that only a steamie would pick up.

What a shame that the folks who proofed this beautiful presentation were not engineers, otherwise

they would have known that the compartment shown at 176 was not a 'Plumbers Block Compartment' but a 'Plummer Block Compartment.'

There's no pleasing some folk is there?

Really looking forward to the next issue, so we can see the second cutaway of Ark.

— J W 'George' Sexton, ex-FCMEMN(P)
Walton-le-Dale, Preston, Lancs

We've had many complimentary comments on the Ark Royal cutaway, which was researched and produced by Ross Watton.

Ross joined the Royal Navy in 1974, with the ambition of becoming a ship artist. He spent his free time drawing ships and portraits of the crew.

In 1977, he won first prize in a competition advertised in the Navy News to design a First Day Cover envelope for the Silver Jubilee Review of the Fleet. Later that year, one of his paintings was featured in the Royal Navy Calendar.

On leaving the service in 1981, he attended art college, where he began work on a large watercolour illustration of HMS Belfast, which was presented to the ship in 1985. He also started writing and illustrating the first of four Anatomy of the Ship volumes.

Since then, he has mainly worked as a book illustrator and postage stamp designer. He is currently designing stamps for the Falkland Islands, commemorating the Centenary of RN Flight.

We are hoping to commission more cutaways from him this year — Ed

Calling Jenny Wrens

I AM APPEALING to any former Wrens in and around Birmingham and the surrounding areas to join the Women's Royal Naval Association, which holds a monthly meeting at the Nautical Club, Bishopgate Street, Birmingham.

If you have served in the WRNS, wartime or peacetime,

please come along once a month — I'm sure there are several isolated Wrens out there.

Age is not a barrier, and we have speakers now and again, and a cafeteria and bar.

I catch two buses to get there, so if you miss the companionship of service life and want to help by increasing our numbers,

contact the secretary: Mrs Valerie McMunn, at 8 Laurence Grove, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton WV6 or ring me on 0121 6035290 for a chat.

Come on Jenny Wrens — the Association needs you!

— Ruth Dunstan,
ex-Leading Wren,
Solihull, West Midlands

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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Barham survivor has witch theory

THE sinking of HMS Barham in November 1941 has been very much in the minds of members of the Norwich branch recently.

Members saw a BBC show last Halloween which featured the story of Helen Duncan, the last person convicted under ancient witchcraft legislation for reportedly revealing secret military information during séances.

One such piece of information, although she was not arrested following the incident, was the sinking of HMS Barham after a torpedo attack, in which more than 860 sailors – two-thirds of the crew – died.

The incident was kept quiet by the British to maintain morale, as the Germans were for several weeks unaware of the incident.

One of the survivors is a member of Norwich branch, and 85-year-old S/M Les Baker has his own theory about the séance.

A Boy Seaman at the time, some letters sent to Les by his mother were returned "Last known ship – killed in action".

In fact Les had clambered on to the upturned hull of the battleship looking for a way off when the Barham exploded.

Les was blown some 200ft into the air, surrounded by smoke and debris, and all his clothes were burned off in the blast.

He was picked up an hour later by destroyer HMS Hotspur, having been spotted clinging to floating wreckage.

Branch secretary S/M Ken Baish said: "Les believes that some of the survivors managed to get messages home to their families, many of whom came from Portsmouth."

"He believes that this is where the 'witch' got her information from – this is, of course, his personal belief."

Cadets maintain standard

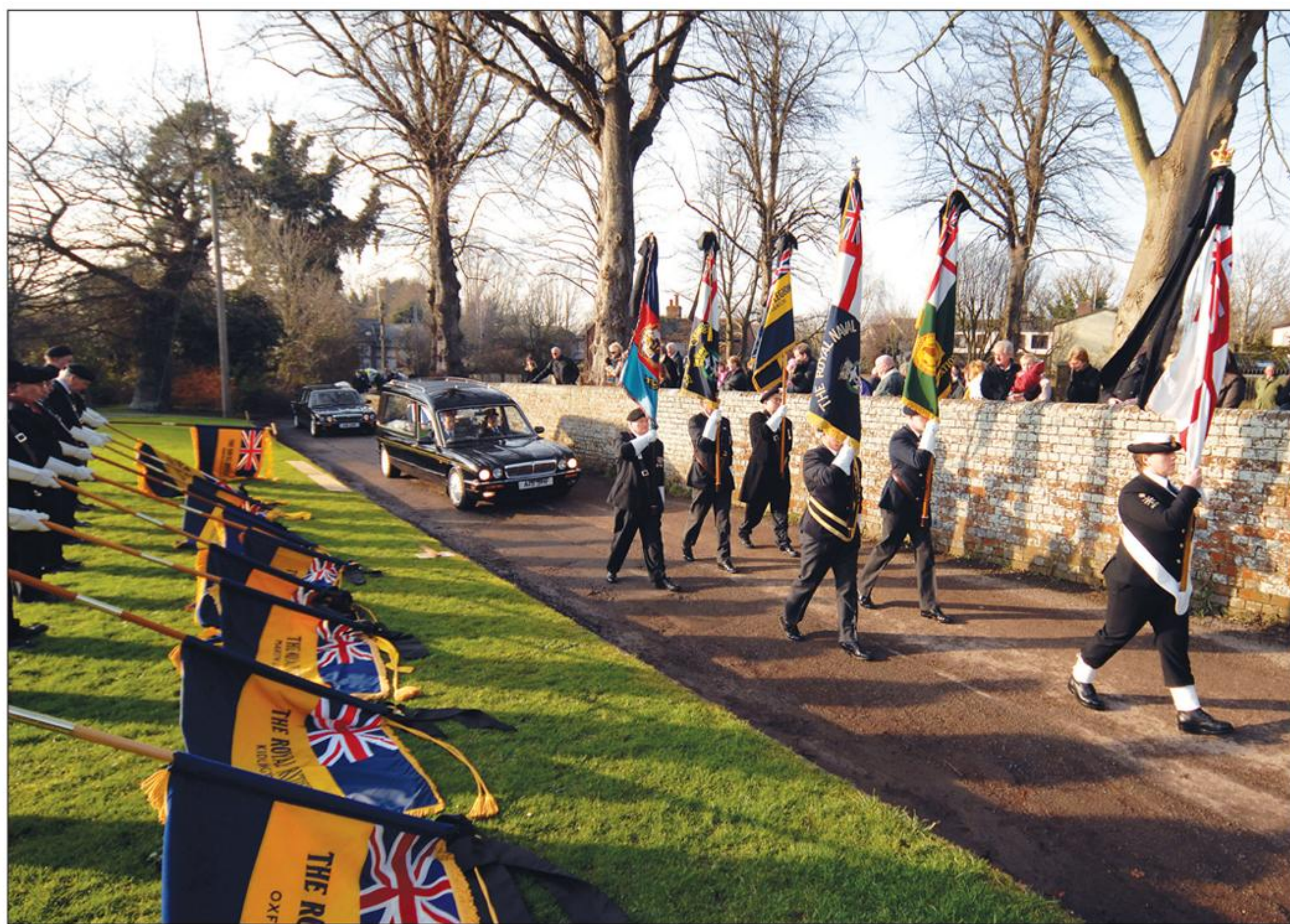
THE Whitehaven branch has proudly flown its standard for the last time.

At a ceremony held at the harbourside headquarters of TS Bee, Whitehaven's Sea Cadet Unit, the remaining members of Whitehaven RNA sadly drew to a close its 24-year history and association with the town, and handed their standard to the cadets for safekeeping.

The cadet unit's commanding officer, Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR, said it was an historical moment and the end of an era.

"The RNA has been active in the town since 1985 and it is very sad that no-one has come forward to keep the branch alive," he said.

He added: "However, the Association is granting a great honour in allowing us to hold their standard, rather than having it returned to their headquarters."



● Standard Bearers mark the arrival of veteran Bill Stone's coffin at his funeral in Oxfordshire

Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Crusham

Farewell to stoker Bill

HUNDREDS of mourners gathered in Oxfordshire for the funeral of Chief Petty Officer Bill Stone, the last surviving naval veteran of both World Wars, who died at the age of 108.

Bill Stone was a stoker who took part in the evacuation of Dunkirk and later served in the cruiser HMS Newfoundland.

He was mentioned in despatches for his part in saving Newfoundland when she was torpedoed in July 1943.

Bill was born in Ledstone, Devon, in 1900. When he was 15 he walked to Kingsbridge to join the Navy, but his father refused to sign the papers.

Two weeks before his 18th birthday he got his wish when he was called up.

He subsequently served as a stoker in many ships including HMS Tiger, HMS Hood and HMS Salamander.

When he left the Navy after World War 2 he set up a flourishing business as a barber in Paignton and was an active member of the RNA and HMS Hood Association.

His funeral was held at St Leonard's Church, in Watlington, with Royal Navy guard of honour. His coffin was carried into the church by a group of serving Navy stokers.

War memorial restoration bid

AN ARCTIC Campaign memorial in a Merseyside churchyard is in urgent need of repair.

The memorial, in the grounds of Liverpool parish church, consists of a flagstaff – ex-Royal Arthur – and two tablets set in concrete-faced brick plinths surrounded by gravel.

One memorial tablet has the badge of the Arctic Campaign Memorial Trust, and is inscribed *In memory of those who died in the Arctic Campaign 1941-45.*

The second has the badge of the North Russia Club and is inscribed *In thanksgiving from those who returned from the Arctic Campaign 1941-45.*

The memorial is exposed to the worst of the weather that sweeps in from the Irish Sea, and has suffered accordingly – the flagstaff is rusting, with halyards and flags often being damaged by vandals, the inscriptions have degraded and the paint worn away, and the concrete is crumbling.

The parish is aiming to:

■ Replace the flagstaff with a single fibreglass flagpole with locking halyards to reduce vandalism,

■ Remove the concrete rendering from the brick plinths, repoint the brickwork and cover the tablets in marble,

■ Restore the inscriptions on



● One of the weather-beaten memorial plinths in the grounds of Liverpool Parish Church

both tablets and cover them with a protective coating,

■ Enclose the area around the flagstaff within a set of Victorian cast-iron railings previously fitted at the old local Seamen's Home.

The cost of carrying out the work is estimated to be in the region of £5,200 – £4,300 for re-ladding the memorial plaques with blue pearl granite and repainting letters and crests, and £900 for the removal of the existing flagpole and the fitting of a new one plus the cost of erecting the railings.

Capt Peter Woods RNR (Retd), the Clerk of Works at the church, said: "Due to the passing of the

years there are now very few veterans of the Arctic Campaign who are still living and clubs such as the North Russia Club have long since been wound up."

The church would like to hear from anyone prepared to help or sponsor the work that needs to be done to ensure that the memorial once again provides a fitting tribute to those who fought in some of the most atrocious conditions in World War 2.

Write to Capt Woods at Liverpool Parish Church, Old Churchyard, Chapel Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L2 8TZ, tel 0151 236 5287, or see the church website www.livpc.co.uk



● S/M Colin Ramsden with his model Swordfish

Colin's Taranto tribute

PRIDE of place at the Taranto lunch of the Fleet Air Arm Association Yorkshire branch went to a model of the aircraft that carried out the raid.

The scale model of a Fairey Swordfish was created by shipmate Colin Ramsden, a member of the branch.

The branch standard was paraded by S/M Ron Summers.

On the top table were branch president Lt Cdr Miles Freeman, who used to be a naval aviator, friend of the branch Cdre Paul Sutermeister, branch chairman Mike Farrington and branch secretary Albert Firth, accompanied by their partners.

The secretary read the FAA prayer and grace and a hearty

lunch was enjoyed by all at the Horsforth Golf Club in Leeds.

After lunch a tot was handed out and the president toasted the men of Taranto.

Guest speaker was S/M Mick Grubb, a branch member who used to be a FAA armourer, who gave a talk on Pearl Harbor, explaining how the Japanese plans were inspired by the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm attack on Taranto.

The president then presented life membership to three founder members of the branch – S/Ms Albert Firth, Vernon Stansfield and Geoff Hainsworth.

The final presentation was Shipmate of the Year, and the shield went to S/M Peter Shepherd, the branch slops officer.

Veterans mourn a true Leader

MEMBERS of the Coastal Forces Veterans' Association are mourning the death of Harry Leader, an active member of their stokers' mess and one of only 10 survivors of MTB 622, which was lost off the coast of Holland in 1943.

Harry, who was 85, ended his naval career as an AB Seaman but was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

After surviving the loss of MTB 622 and severely injured, he was rescued by the Germans and spent many months in Dutch and German hospitals before being incarcerated in a POW camp, from which he and three others succeeded in escaping.

Pam Phillips, London Branch Secretary of the Coastal Forces Veterans' Association, said: "Harry thoroughly enjoyed the friendly banter between 'Home Waters' and 'Mediterranean War Theatre' crews."

"He was absolutely a lovely man, no airs and graces, what you saw is exactly what you got."

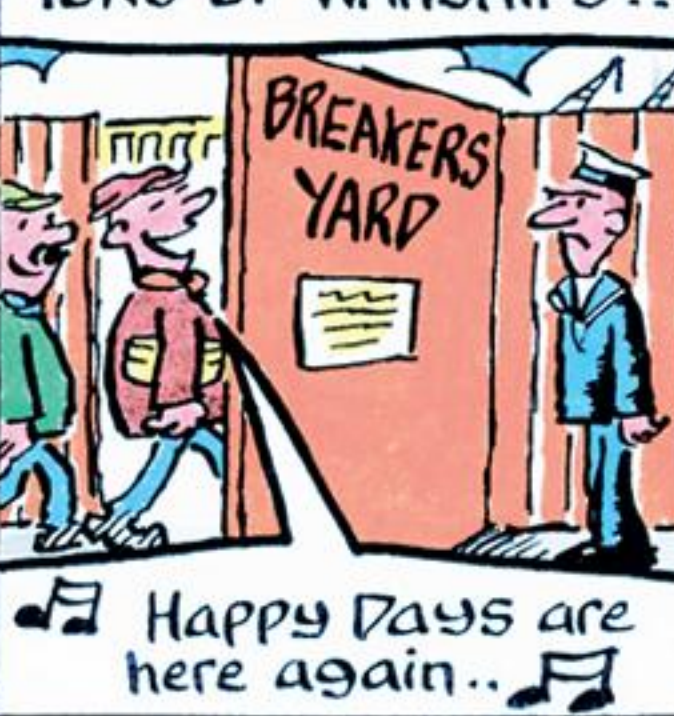
She added: "He will be remembered as a true friend, but it should also be remembered that he stands among the ranks of this country's heroes."

Naval Quirks

AT THE END OF BOTH WORLD WARS, THE RN HAD TO DRASTICALLY REDUCE ITS TONNAGE..



..IN 1949 ALONE, IT SCRAPPED 500,000 TONS OF WARSHIPS..



..THAT'S THE EQUIVALENT OF MORE THAN 300 DESTROYERS!



..WHEREAS ALL THIS FUSS IS ABOUT YOUR MUM CHUCKING OUT ONE OLD BATTERED MODEL OF THE DESTROYER HMS 'COSSACK'!



Capital scheme

A DISCOUNT travel scheme for people who receive certain military pensions or compensation operates in the London area.

The Veterans Concessionary Travel Scheme (VCTS) is available to all those in receipt of an ongoing payment under the War Pensions Scheme or Guaranteed Income Payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

War widows, widowers and dependents in receipt of the same payments are also eligible.

Eligible applicants will be issued with an Oyster photocard, which allows them to travel free within London by bus, Tube, Docklands Light Railway, tram and London Overground services.

The scheme is of particular benefit to veterans under 60 and those who live outside London who are not eligible for a Freedom Pass.

For details on the scheme see website www.tfl.gov.uk/tickets/faresandtickets/8734.aspx

York poetry

YORK branch had a unique present for the commanding officer of HMS York, who has accepted their invitation to become the branch's Honorary Commodore.

When Cdr Andy Price attended the branch meeting he was presented not only with a ship's crest and a signed picture of the ship, but with a volume of poems entitled *Soldiers of the Sea* written by shipmate Bernard Hallas, the RNA's oldest PRO.

Harrow award

SOUTH Harrow branch has awarded its Shipmate of the Year Trophy to S/M Brian Joy for his efforts, including the Christmas draw, proceeds of which were divided between the RNA and the Royal British Legion, the branch's landlords.

The Peter Cant Trophy, in memory of a former chairman who had served in the FAA in HMS Centaur, was awarded to S/M Marion Edwards, Honorary Treasurer and Social Secretary, for her untiring contribution.

Brightlingsea's Illustrious outing

THE Brightlingsea branch was in the doldrums a couple of years ago, as Secretary Ron Underwood told *Navy News*, but now it's alive and very well indeed, if a little sore in the head after a most enjoyable visit to HMS Illustrious.

The trip happened because the branch was invited to submit an application to be affiliated to the carrier.

The Executive Warrant Officer on board, Russ Billings, worked hard to get the application approved, with the result that Brightlingsea RNA is now proudly affiliated to the carrier's Warrant Officer/CPOs' Mess.

And so it came about that the Brightlingsea shipmates were invited to visit the mess and (to quote the invitation) "give thanks to Pusser's Rum".

Needing no more persuasion, the 19-strong team set out for Greenwich to join the carrier – with the proviso that if anyone were to fall off the PAS boat, no attempt would be made to retrieve him, and the incident would be treated as a "burial at sea".

No such fatalities occurred and the team successfully boarded the ship, to be greeted by the officer of the day and his team.

As Ron takes up the story: "Our guided tour started on the flight deck, slightly larger than my last ship, MAC Alexia, (*Merchant Aircraft Carrier - Ed*) from which I last flew in May 1945.

"There were no arrester wires and no barrier, the aircraft all seem to slip in sideways these days."

After a briefing from the Executive Warrant Officer on flight operations the shipmates posed for a group photograph (see above),



taken by PO Chrissy Wood, the first of several women they were to meet on board that day.

"We travelled up to the flight deck by the aircraft lift to save our ageing legs any undue punishment," recounts Ron.

"We finally arrived in the WO/CPOs Mess where the residents were already preparing to give thanks to Pusser's Rum.

"The bar was manned (if that's the right word) by two ladies, one a stoker and the other an aircraft handler, and very efficient they were too.

"Ladies are, of course, an integral part of any ship's crew nowadays."

The ship's outgoing

Commanding Officer, Capt Steve Chick, proposed the loyal toast and in an ensuing, poignant toast the shipmates raised their glasses to a departed friend, Les Sayer, who sadly died before the visit.

"It was a great honour to have the Captain of the Illustrious with us and he and his officers established an instant rapport – a thing unheard of in our days," commented Ron.

He added: "We were given many mementoes of our stay, one was a Royal Marine bugle, which as a wonderful postscript was played by our branch bugler at the funeral service for Les a few days later."

After many more tots –

somehow the glasses kept filling up despite their protests – the shipmates enjoyed a buffet and swapped dits over the curry and rice.

"We all dredged up long-forgotten memories and exchanged stories of old and not-so-old as the lamps (and us) were swinging to and fro.

"The rapport between our hosts and us was instantaneous, which underlines our motto 'Once Navy Always Navy'," said Ron.

After a challenging but successful disembarkation, the Brightlingsea shipmates made their way safely home and are already planning their next trip to the carrier.

Royal in Cyprus takeover bid

IT'S ALL change in Cyprus since the chairman and founder of the branch six years ago, Shipmate Nobby Hall, left one island for another one – he became Assistant Commissioner of Police in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Stepping into Nobby's shoes as the new chairman is S/M Andrew Noyes, previously the Royal Marines Corps Secretary based at Whale Island in Portsmouth, who now lives in Cyprus.

Asked if it was unusual for a Royal Marine to become a chairman of an RNA branch, Lt Col Noyes replied that he had no difficulty with taking on the post as during his 40 years of service with the Marines he had served in HMS Tartar, a tribal-class frigate, on both Albion and Bulwark as a member of the embarked force, been a staff officer on the Naval Staff in London, and then taught at the RN Staff College at Greenwich.

And after 13 years based at Whale Island as the RM Corps Secretary, he felt entirely at home chairing the committee of an RNA branch.

S/M Jean Hall was re-elected as Treasurer and Nobby Hall and Fred Cooper were elected as Life Vice Chairmen. S/M Bill Hellier was elected as the new slops member in place of Nick Smith, whose efforts were much appreciated, and new shipmates Richard and Wendy Mottershead were welcomed to the branch.

Memory garden

MEMBERS of Wansbeck branch have visited the National Memorial Arboretum at Lichfield.

While looking round the impressive gardens and monuments, every shipmate found the name of a friend or friends they had lost during the Service days.

They also paid a visit to colleagues from the Lichfield branch before they headed back home to Northumberland.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our January edition (right) was HMS Medway.

Among the many who correctly identified her was Jacqueline Ralph, of Tasmania, Australia, who wins our £50 prize.

This month's mystery vessel (above) was an ironclad battleship.

After a somewhat shaky start she settled down to a long life with many modifications and became a favourite of the Fleet.

King George V served in her for a while as Lieutenant Prince George of Wales.

What was her name? Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*,

MYSTERY PICTURE 169

Name

Address

My answer



Family gathers to honour Naval hero

SHIPMATES from Plymouth branch gathered at Ford Park Cemetery on the last day of 2008 to once more pay their respects to Naval hero Lt George Hinckley VC.

Standing with the shipmates (pictured above) were George's great-granddaughter Joan Smith and his great-great-grandson Andrew Smith.

Also present, for the first time, were relatives Mr and Mrs Lethbridge, who only learned of their great-grandfather's grave from a press report in the West Country a year ago.

Standards were paraded from Plymouth branches of the RNA,

Merchant Navy Association, Korea Veterans Association and the Ex-Services Federation.

A short service was conducted at the graveside following a wreath-laying ceremony.

Lt Hinckley, then serving as an able seaman aboard HMS Sphinx during the Taiping Rebellion in China in 1862, carried two wounded officers to safety whilst under continuous heavy enemy fire.

He was awarded the Victoria Cross in February of the following year and, after leaving the Service in 1867, settled in Devon, where he died on New Year's Eve 1904 at the age of 85.

Dagenham toasts Paddy

RNA General Secretary Paddy McClurg stepped into the breach at Dagenham branch when they found themselves without a guest of honour at their annual dinner.

Shipmate Paddy gave the

Loyal Toast, preceded by an explanation of why it is traditionally held sitting down, followed by a speech in which his well-known Irish humour was much appreciated.

Lottery comes up trumps for Hertford

HERTFORD branch held a special dinner at the Age Concern Hall, Ware, to celebrate their 70th anniversary – thanks to Lottery funding.

A grant of £2,500 enabled members to have a subsidised ticket and free transport when their circumstances do not normally allow them to attend the annual dinner.

Guest of honour was submariner Capt Dick Husk, Chief of Staff to Flag Officer Submarines during the Falklands Conflict, and around 100 members, partners and friends attended the event.

Capt Husk was welcomed by branch president S/M Bryan Smalley.

At the end of the dinner the Eric Knight Award for Shipmate of the Year was presented to three people who tied for the honour – S/Ms Maurice Kerr (social secretary and acting branch secretary), Tony Faulkner (standard bearer) and Bryan Smalley (president and press officer), all three founder members.

Each received an engraved pewter hip flask. The Eric Knight Award honours the memory of a former shipmate who rose to high office in the Association in the 1960s.

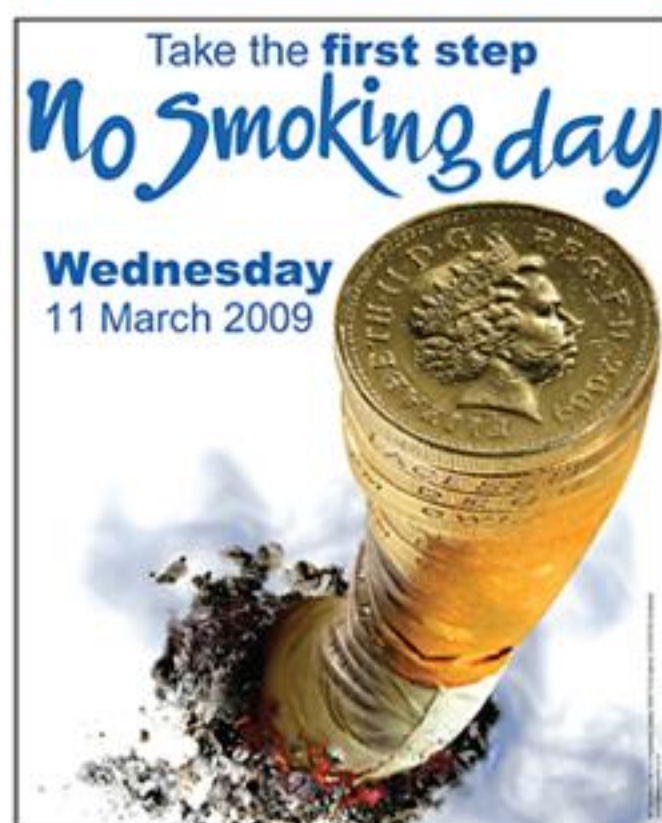
Hertford's evening of celebration concluded with dancing to the band Loose Change.



● France Nord branch's chairman S/M John Marett presents a belfry to the Branch at the members' Trafalgar lunch. The bell had long since been gathering dust when the idea was mooted that it should be put on display. John put his carpentry and ropework skills to the test, and the impressive result is shown above.



TWO SIX



Put that light out

THE ninth military No Smoking Day takes place on Wednesday March 11 – part of the wider UK campaign to kick the habit.

One in five matelots or marines light up (yep, we were surprised by that figure too...); the figure is one in six in the RAF, but three out of every ten squaddies enjoy a tab. (In civvy street, a quarter of the populace are smokers.)

Smoking remains the UK's number-one cause of avoidable premature death.

By quitting, a 20-a-day smoker should save more than £2,000 every year – as well as improving their general health.

The Navy is providing free patches, gum and other cessation services to sailors and marines who want to stop.

There will also be various events at establishments, bases and at sea. Further information is also available at military.nosmokingday.org.uk/index.htm.

Don't know? Ask your DO

WANT to know more about...

RN Temporary Memoranda:

■ 022/09 The Naval Service Prizes and Awards Fund;
■ 16/09 Divisional Officer Courses at the Royal Navy Leadership Academy (West/East).

And are you aware of...

Defence Instruction Notices:
■ 2009DIN01-020 Introduction of the Leading Aircraft Controller FRI;

■ 2009DIN01-019 Naval Service terms of service – Update of Standard Initial Training Periods (SITP) for RN Ratings and RM Other Ranks;

■ 2009DIN01-018 The Naval Service Prizes and Awards Fund
■ 2009DIN01-010 HM Forces National Express Coach Discount Scheme Administrative Instructions;

■ 2009DIN01-007 Policy for the Recruitment and Management of Transsexual Personnel in the Armed Forces.

See your Divisional Officer.

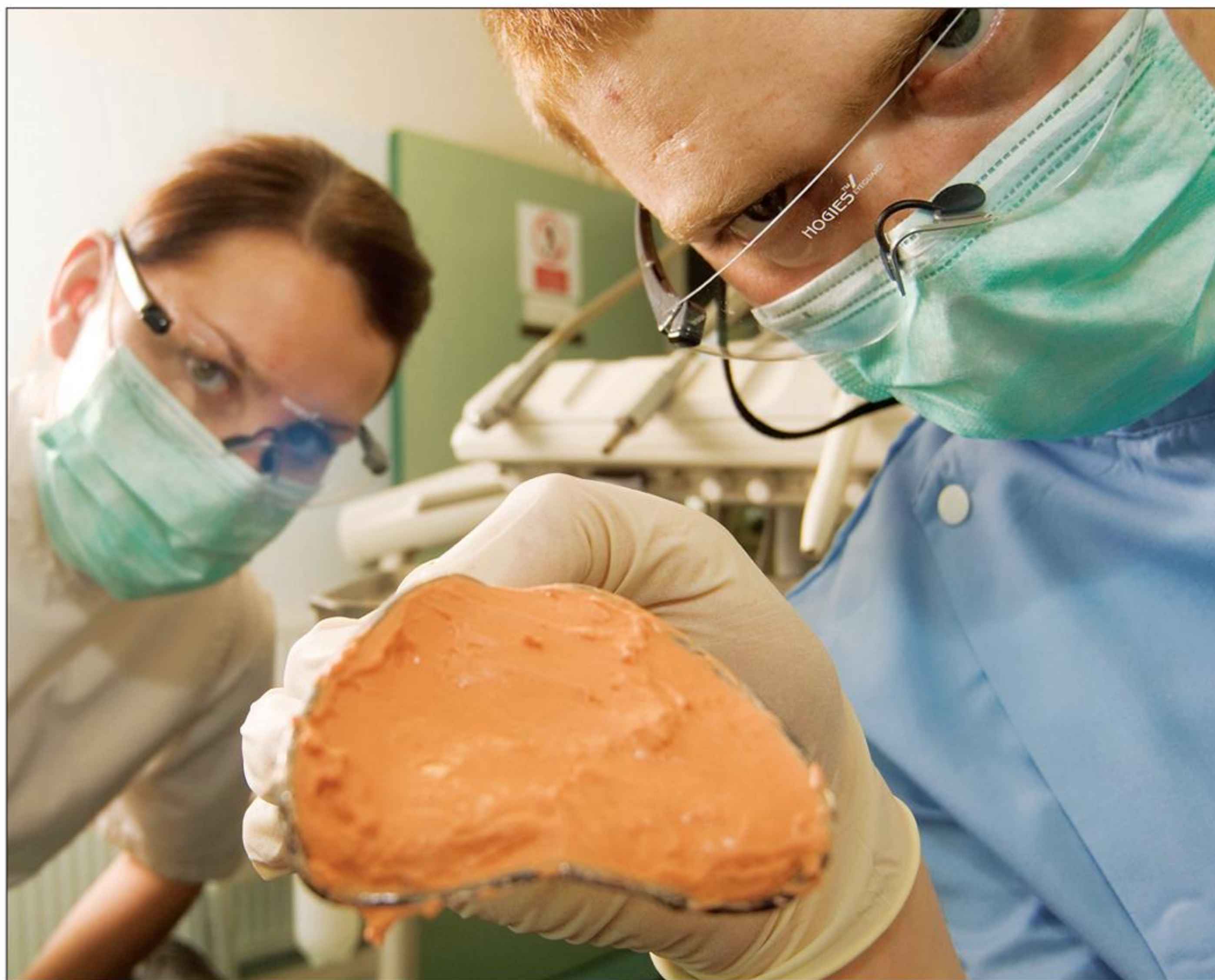
Broadsheet goes digital

BROADSHEET 2008 – the Royal Navy's annual round-up – will soon be available to view and download via www.royalnavy.mod.uk and www.rncom.mod.uk websites.

If you wish to obtain a hard copy of the publication, contact: DGMC-DEFPRNavygroup@mod.uk



TWO SIX



● **Molar explorers...** The Service Personnel Command Paper should make it easier for families of RN and RM personnel to gain access to an NHS dentist

Picture: LA(Phot) Steve Johncock, RNAS Yeovilton

Great idea, gash name

OVER the past few months a lot of the Naval Families Federation's time has been devoured focusing on the Service Personnel Command Paper.

At this point you are probably thinking 'Yes, and....?' writes Kim Richardson, NFF chairwoman.

Well, the Paper has two aims: to end any disadvantage that being a member of the Armed Forces may impose on the Serving person, their families and veterans. It specifically seeks to counter the difficulties that result from mobility and separation, and identifies those areas where special treatment is needed to achieve this.

And secondly, the Paper sets out how we can better support and recognise those who have been wounded in the service of their country.

So all good stuff – really positive and timely with so many personnel being away from home at this particular moment in time.

So what's the problem?

In my view, the name of the Paper doesn't lend itself to seeking out more information.

It doesn't resonate with the Service population in the same way as perhaps 'Help for Heroes' or 'The Poppy Appeal' do, but it is nonetheless very important.

I also don't believe our Serving personnel and their families know what the Paper undertakes to do and how it could affect them. And, that really worries me.

Ministers are asking the NFF for feedback on what is working and what is not and my concern is that we may not be giving an accurate picture of how things really are for you and your family.

■ Did you know for example that the doubling of the AFCS payment for injury is part of the Command Paper?

■ Did you know that Service personnel have 'priority status' across all regions in England for affordable housing (up to one-year

after they have left the Service)?

■ Did you know that health departments across the UK have agreed to plan their area dental provision with Service populations in mind?

■ Did you know that if you are required to move within UK and are on a NHS waiting list, you will not move to the bottom of the new list?

■ Did you know that subject to Service exigencies personnel and partners in receipt of IVF treatment will not be required to move until their cycle of treatment is complete.

■ Did you know that there are now Armed Forces Advocates working in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Home Office – UK Border Agency and the Department of Health (DH)?

These are just a few of the things that the Command Paper has achieved. For a better understanding of what it all means log on to: www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/Personnel/Welfare/ServicePersonnelCommandPaper.htm

One of the topics we have been focusing on is access to NHS dentists (see right).

Finding a dentist shouldn't be a problem, but if you are experiencing difficulty in securing NHS dentistry then we would like to know about it.

We are being told that dentistry is not the huge issue you are saying it is. This hard evidence is vital as feedback to the Service Personnel Command Paper.

You can contact us on 02392 654374, email admin@nff.org.uk or via our website www.nff.org.uk.

The tooth is out there

SOME TIPS FOR SERVICE FAMILIES TO FIND AN NHS DENTIST

■ Your local primary care trust (PCT) is in charge of arranging NHS dental services in your area. These services include urgent treatment, out-of-hours care and emergencies. If you are having problems finding an NHS dentist, your PCT is there to help.

■ You do not need to register with a dentist to get regular treatment. Simply contact a practice offering NHS dentistry and ask if you can have an appointment.

■ You will be able to have any treatment that your dentist feels you need in order to keep your teeth, gums and mouth healthy on the NHS. These treatments include dentures, crowns and bridges as well as any preventative treatment needed.

■ Your dentist will ask you back for regular check ups – but not necessarily as frequently as every six months. If your dental health is good, you may only be asked to come for a check up every two years.

HOW TO FIND AN NHS DENTIST

Go to the search section at the top of the home page of the NHS Choices website www.nhs.uk, select the dentists box and put in your postcode.

This will bring up a list of dentists in your area. From here you can click through for more information about which practices are taking on new NHS patients and how to contact your PCT if you are having difficulty finding one. You'll also find a dental inquiries telephone number and details of how to obtain out-of-hours treatment.

If this route proves unsuccessful or you don't have access to a PC then call NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

There is no stipulation for the distance to travel to an NHS dentist and the dentist does not have to be in your own PCT area. You can choose a dentist in the area where you would like to be seen, or if you have a preference for a particular dentist or dental practice elsewhere you can ask the dentist if you can apply to be accepted for treatment on his/her list. It will depend on the local contract/agreement as to the catchment area from which the practice is bound to take patients.

The entitlement is to receive NHS primary care dental services, under the terms of the NHS contract (or agreement if a PDS practice). The entitlement does not specify how local the service should be. However, every PCT has been allocated funding to provide the necessary primary care dental services to their patients. Dentists are obliged to provide all proper and necessary dental care and treatment which the patient is willing to undergo.

Drome is where the heart is

FASLANE Sportsdrome gave workers on the Scottish base the chance to start and stay healthy in 2009 when they held their first Freshers' Fair and healthy lifestyle day.

Service personnel, civilian workers and contractors from all around the site flocked to the gymnasium to receive information and demonstrations on how to stay active and healthy in the year ahead.

HMS Neptune Triathlon Club, the Adventurous Training Store, Field Gun crew, Neptune Archery Club, the Sailing Centre, Sub-aqua club, Ski and Snowboard Centre and Loch Lomond Amateur Rowing Club were all represented on the day.

Also setting up stalls were the Royal Navy Cycling Team and staff from the Navy sick quarters and base dental department.

The event was a particular success for the archery club, with visitors being given the opportunity to try their skill with a bow.

Club member, Karen Gold, said: "We've had 20 people sign up to join during the day. We train in the base's gym every Wednesday and also have an outdoor target field at Aitrew Glen.

"It gives us the chance to get out the gym when the weather is good and shoot in the fresh air."

Another activity which was popular on the day was rowing. Cdr Martin Claxton was on hand to show people the hi-tech indoor rowing machines and invite them to sign up for some taster sessions at Loch Lomond rowing club.

"The indoor rowing technology has come on leaps and bounds in recent years," said Cdr Claxton.

"Rowers can now be connected via the internet and race one another on their machines. It makes the Nintendo Wii look tame in comparison.

"Of course there is no substitute for getting out on the water and you couldn't ask for a better backdrop than Loch Lomond."

The base's dental department was ably represented by Surg Lt Alexa Fyfe, who gave visitors the low-down on oral health as well as information on what services the base's dental department could offer them.

Also on hand were staff from HMS Neptune's sick quarters, concentrating mainly on blood-pressure and diet during the fair.

Participants were offered free blood-pressure tests and were given leaflets on healthy and nutritious eating.

"We've had a fantastic response," said nurse Maureen Anderson.

"After the indulgences of Christmas and New Year everyone feels they could do with eating a bit more healthily and dozens of people have stopped for advice."

The Sportsdrome's Lt Doug Wylie, who helped arrange the Fair, said: "The day has been a huge success. I have spoken to many people today who have worked in the Naval Base for years and yet never knew the facilities available to them.

"It's been a real education for them to come along today, and they've taken the first step on their way to a fitter, healthier lifestyle."

Doug continued: "It's the first Freshers' Fair and Healthy Lifestyle day HM Naval Base Clyde has ever held, but if today is anything to go by then I've got the feeling it won't be the last."

News and information for serving personnel

To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield

THIS magnificent silver centrepiece celebrates one of the most famous – and tragic – endeavours in British history.

Trophy No.26382 commemorates the British Antarctic Expedition 1910 and Capt Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated attempt to be the first man to reach the South Pole.

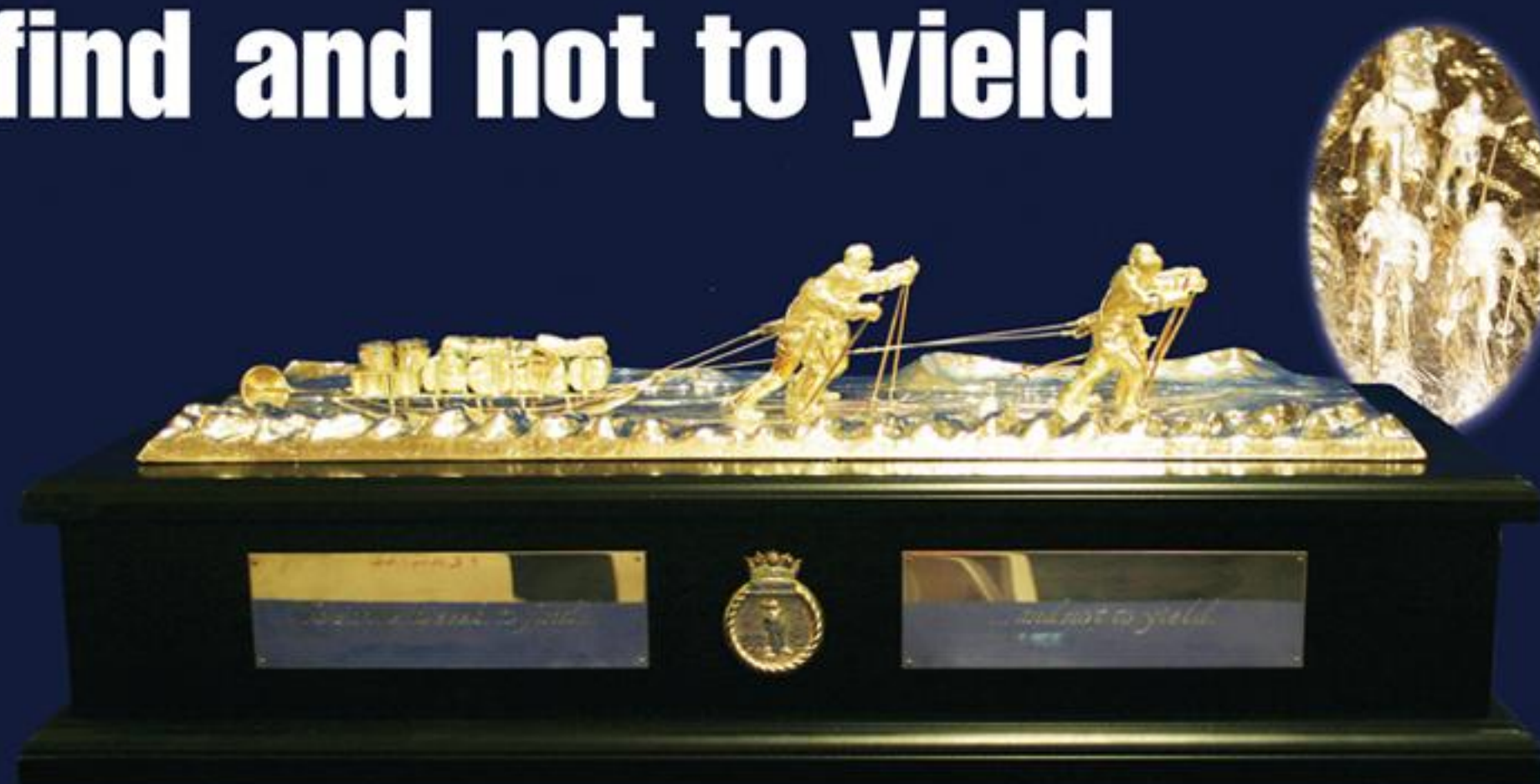
The naval officer and his party – Lt Henry 'Birdie' Bowers, PO Edgar Evans, Capt Lawrence 'Titus' Oates of the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoons and Dr Edward Wilson – would indeed reach the foot of the globe, but they would be beaten in their attempt to be the first by Norwegian Roald Amundsen (one month and three days ahead of Scott's team on December 14 1911).

Bitter disappointment was compounded by bitter weather as the Britons made their way back to base camp. PO Evans died on February 17.

His comrades struggled on for one more month. Oates famously sacrificed himself so that the three remaining men in the polar party might survive, leaving the tent with the immortal words: "I am just going outside and I may be some time."

Scott, Bowers and Wilson lived for 12 more days, eventually dying stranded in their tent, 11 miles from a supply dump, on March 29 1912.

The trophy – with only four skiers it suggests that the party post PO Evans' death is depicted – is inscribed: "To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield." The same words could be found on the memorial cross erected by Scott's fellow explorers in 1913 – and remain the motto of the RN survey ship named in the captain's honour to this day.



London and Nottingham go to Bristol

THIRTY of the newest members of the Royal Naval Reserve travelled to Portsmouth for a first introduction to life in the RN.

As well as a tour of HMS Nottingham, the recruits from HMS President (London) and HMS Sherwood (Nottingham) were put through their paces with a series of training exercises designed to test their comfort zones and acquaint them with naval life.

After mustering for Colours on the deck of HMS Bristol, the recruits had an introduction to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear warfare (mercifully, not for real), before visiting Horsea Island for a presentation by the RNR Diving Branch.

Then it was back to Whale Island and first steps on the parade ground of HMS Excellent; this provided a superb opportunity for several officer cadets to demonstrate their leadership skills.

"HMS Bristol is a fantastic asset in so much that it offers RNR trainees the opportunity to experience naval routines on a warship in a purely training environment. After the experience they leave enthused, highly motivated and better equipped for the challenges ahead," said CPO(NE) Maurice Weight of HMS President.

The weekend was a resounding success, enabling the trainees to progress their task books helping them move one step nearer to their New Entry Course at HMS Raleigh.

Naval family life online

AS PART of its impressive www.seayourhistory.org.uk project by the Royal Naval Museum, a new section has been added to celebrate the life of naval families past and present.

Over 120 extracts from 18 interviewees has been added to the site, a sprawling 'virtual museum' designed to celebrate the deeds of the 20th/21st-Century Senior Service.

In the latest addition to the project, find out how seven-year-old Millie Hodgson coped when her father went down with HMS Hood; listen to Pat Fish describe the lack of support she received following the death of her son; and hear the pride Glenis Mould felt when her husband received a commendation from the Second Sea Lord.

In all, around 15,000 items – or 'digital assets' as the museum calls them – have been loaded on to the site: photographs, audio files, first-hand accounts, posters, cartoons.

The project has drawn upon not merely the RNM's own archives, but those also of the RN Submarine, FAA, and RM Museums, the Fleet Photographic Unit and the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historic Trust.

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr Gregor Birse (Fleet Media Ops), 93832 8809.



Badge of honour

A SIGNIFICANT milestone in the history of the Royal Navy Police was achieved recently when their rank badges were changed to reflect their present day role.

The change follows a number of high level reviews over the past few years, culminating in the change of name from Regulators to Royal Navy Police (although 'reggy' remains a nickname still heavily in use in the Service).

"The change reflects our role today alongside our land and air counterparts," said Lt Cdr Mark May, Naval Provost Marshal Northern, based at HM Naval Base Clyde.

"Individual rank titles will remain unchanged, but badges will be altered to incorporate a service police identity."

The new rank badges include the words "RN Police" woven into the bottom of standard rank and rate slides, with shoulder flashes to be worn when in dress and tropical uniform.

From their early origins as ship's marshals and corporals at the start of the 17th Century, the Royal Navy Police have undergone an evolutionary change. The Master at Arms rate was introduced around 1699 and is still in use today, while the Ship's Police Branch was formed in 1860, only to be renamed the Regulating Branch in 1919. 1945 saw the introduction of Leading Patrolmen, before reverting back to the term Regulator in 1968.

"The branch or specialisation has been around in one guise or another for over 300 years," continued Lt Cdr May.

"Our role is to support operational effectiveness and delivery of military capability by the prevention, investigation and detection of crime and disciplinary offences across the Naval Service.

"It is a strange and humbling feeling to know that you are part of this tradition and present at another milestone in the history of the branch."

Chaplains taste life at BRNC

FOUR civilian chaplains to the military headed to the spiritual home of the RN officer corps for an insight into life in the Senior Service.

Imam Asim Hafiz (Muslim), Dr Sunil Kariyakarawana (Buddhist), Rabbi Malcolm Wiseman (Jewish) and Krishan Attri (Hindu) were given a tour of BRNC in Dartmouth before sitting down to a comprehensive series of presentations on the workings of the Navy, the role of culture belief, history and ethos in today's RN.

Imam Hafiz took prayers on divisions; BRNC has an international intake and a large number of Muslim cadets.

DURING recent visits by senior officers to men and women in the front line, a sizeable number of sailors and marines asked their VIP visitors where they could get medals in recognition of their service of their country.

Well, here's the answer.

The Iraq Medal

The Iraq Medal was instituted to recognise service in Iraq on and after January 20 2003, to a future date to be decided.

Eligibility requires 30 days' continuous service ashore in Iraq, or, for service afloat, 30 days' continuous service in the waters of the Northern Arabian Gulf, north of the 28th parallel (NAG), or 45 days' accumulated service in the NAG during a single deployment.

Future eligibility for the Iraq Medal is under consideration as part of the plans for the future UK involvement in Iraq.

Operational Service Medal 'Afghanistan'

OSM Afghanistan (previously known as OSM 'Veritas') was instituted to recognise service in Afghanistan on and after September 11 2001, to a future date to be decided. The medal is available either with a named clasp to denote service in Afghanistan itself, or without the clasp which recognises service outside Afghanistan that is in support of operations in Afghanistan.

Eligibility is, in general, 30 days' continuous service in Afghanistan – though some service may require 21 continuous days.

In general, 30 days' continuous service is also required for the



● Three medals emblazoned on the uniform of one of HMS Iron Duke's ship's company during a visit to St Kitt's last year
Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, FRPU East

medal without clasp in locations outside Afghanistan (again, there are some locations where 21 days' continuous service will suffice).

To be eligible, service in these locations must be specifically in support of operations in Afghanistan itself, namely: Islamabad, Pakistan; Manama, Bahrain; Muharraq, Bahrain; PSAB, Saudi Arabia.

Since December 2004, service afloat in the Gulf of Aden/Indian Ocean, and support to that service ceased to directly support

operations in Afghanistan.

Accumulated Service Medal (ACSM)

As the title suggests, eligibility for the ACSM requires three years' (1,080 days) service in any operational theatre that has been recognised by the award of a British campaign service medal, eg South Atlantic Medal 1982, Gulf Medal 1990-91, Iraq Medal, the OSMs (Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo), and the clasps to the General Service Medal (1962)

retrospective to August 1969 (the date of the institution of the 'Northern Ireland' clasp).

To apply

Sailors and marines should apply through their UPO who will raise multiple-entry form JPA S003 for submission to the MOD Medal Office.

Personnel without a convenient UPO may apply in writing to the MOD Medal Office at the following address: MOD Medal Office, Building 250, Imjin Barracks, Gloucester, GL3 1HW.

See you after Easter



DRUGS - It's **your** call

In need of the feminine touch

THE tests are compulsory, but being a tester isn't.

The CDT (Compulsory Drug Testing) team based on Whale Island need a female PO to join them from May 18.

This is a two-year billet for 'any branch' but cannot accommodate SWDC due to short notice requirements of travelling worldwide.

A civilian driving licence and in-date passport are essential.

The post demands self-motivation, excellent communication skills, integrity, good judgement and flexibility. It offers a unique Tri-Service opportunity.

Applicants should contact RCMWEGS1 CPO Steve Adkins on Ext 93832 8806 or email steve.adkins922@mod.uk

☑ We'll have a feature on the CDT team in next month's paper

Where Saints in glory stand

THE last act in the long and proud career of Her Majesty's Ship Southampton was played out in Portsmouth on a beautiful, crisp late winter's day.

With ship's company past and present, 13 former commanding officers, civic dignitaries, affiliates and CINC Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope on the jetty, the venerable destroyer was formally decommissioned.

Thus did the curtain come down on a career with the Senior Service which began in dramatic fashion. The Saint was launched in January 1979 and commissioned in the autumn of 1981.

Her trials and work-up were cut short by the Falklands conflict and she was dispatched to the South Atlantic at the war's end.

Southampton's CO on that first deployment in 1982 was Capt Sam Salt – returning to the islands just weeks after his previous Type 42, HMS Sheffield, had been fatally wounded by an Argentine Exocet missile.

"When we were there, it was still a dangerous environment, so the ship's company had to learn fast," the now retired rear admiral said.

"Learn fast they did – and they proved what an asset the ship could be."

She proved to be an asset, too, in the

Caribbean, evacuating the populace of Montserrat in 1995 when Chances Peak volcano erupted.

And she was on hand with tanker RFA Grey Rover to intercept a vessel carrying £350m cocaine in 2006 – just two highlights in a 27-year career.

Perhaps it was fitting that Southampton's final major deployment, which ended just before Christmas 2007, was to the South Atlantic.

Since then she has been used for navigational and gunnery training around the UK, joined the Tall Ships at Rouen and paid a farewell visit to her namesake city along the Solent.

By then, the destroyer had clocked up more than 700,000 miles on her odometer.

Southampton's CO for that final deployment and exercises around the UK was Cdr Richard Morris.

"We're sad to see her go," he said, "but we're encouraged that in the same base we've got HMS Daring – the real future of the Navy."

Picture: LA(Phot) Owen King, FRPU East



Frosty and FOSTies

AFTER five months out of action thanks to a spot of maintenance, HMS Hurworth is warming up for future duties.

While the UK endured one of the most bitter winters for two decades, the Hunt-class warship was out and about off the south coast shaking off those overhaul cobwebs.

The tail end of 2008 saw the minehunter undergoing improvements to her fire detection system (no need to guess what that does), revamping the junior rates' accommodation and fitting Seafox, the successor to the 'yellow submarine' mine disposal submersible.

After a series of harbour tests and drills, Hurworth left Pompey for, er, more tests and drills (fire, flood, injuries – the usual gamut of calamity caused by assessors from the Flag Officer Sea Training).

With the FOSTies (a) satisfied and (b) gone, the ship could conduct engine and weapons tests in typical January weather (ie horrible).

"The trials were to prove the engines work, our guns go bang and that Seafox can flush out mines," explained navigator Lt James Smith.

All of which was a new experience to AB(MW)s Andy Torr and Dan Phillips, enjoying (if that's the right word to describe the Channel in January) their first spell at sea after training at Collingwood.

"I enjoyed my first few days at sea, even though I felt very unwell at the start," said Dan. "I have been promised that the more time at sea the better I will feel."

His young shipmate added: "Working with Seafox was good fun – I was glad to have finally got some practical experience of mine warfare."

They and the rest of Hurworth's ship's company have plenty of that ahead. There's Operational Sea Training to come in Scotland before the sailors head to the Gulf.

Skill, tenacity and diligence...

THE "immense contribution" made by the RN's ultimate 'fixers' has been recognised with a commendation from Britain's second most senior admiral.

CINC Fleet Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope singled out the men and women of the Mobile Aircraft Support Unit (MASU) – 'the RAC and AA for military helicopters' – for their efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan in particular.

The task of the air engineers based at Fleetlands in Gosport – with a permanent detachment in Kandahar – is to provide on-the-spot repairs to helicopters above and beyond what engineers with a specific unit or squadron would be expected to provide.

On top of that, the MASU experts devise modifications to military helicopters to meet 'urgent operational requirement', such as a chute to get rid of spent Minigun shell cases on Chinooks.

For all this, and more, MASU – one half

of Fleet Forward Support (Air); the Materials Integrity Group who ensure that a helicopter's working parts and fuselage do not fail is the other – received a Commander-in-Chief Fleet Commendation... from the man himself.

Admiral Stanhope toured MASU's facilities, discussed the team's ongoing work around the globe, inspected some modifications the engineers are working on for front-line units, and presented Afghanistan operational service medals to CPOs Burton, Corcoran, Davidson and Parker and PO Davenport who had recently returned from theatre.

Their work in Afghanistan has frequently taken place under enemy fire – and in temperatures of 50°C in high summer and below freezing in the winter.

The admiral also presented CO Cdr Nigel Higgins with that commendation, which reads, in part:

"MASU has made an immense contribution

to the repair of aircraft and restoration of vital operational capability in support of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan."

It continues: "At a time when UK forces are facing unprecedented challenges in environmentally harsh and operationally-dangerous circumstances, the resolve and effectiveness of the MASU teams serve to make them exemplars of outstanding loyalty and professionalism."

Since 2005, MASU repairers have carried out just short of 150 structural repairs to helicopters – making them airworthy again for operations, and have even fixed a few RAF and Allied fixed-wing aircraft.

The unit's citation concludes: "MASU's overall contribution far outweighs the sum of its individual parts, whilst its *esprit de corps*, professionalism, technical skill, tenacity and diligence are the foundations upon which this critical capability is built."

Blue is the new red

YOUR eyes do not deceive you and yes, the year is 2009, not 1969.

Arriving at Culdrose – and staying there for the year to mark two milestones in naval aviation – is Sea King XV648, painted in the dark blue livery in which the famous helicopter was introduced into service.

2009 marks the 100th anniversary of naval flight and the 40th birthday of the Sea King (it made its maiden flight in May 1969 and joined a trials unit at Culdrose that summer).

To celebrate the birthdays, one 771 NAS Sea King went into the spray workshop at Yeovilton and emerged dark blue.

The original paint scheme was eventually phased out in the mid 80s in favour of grey for the pinger squadrons and red and grey for SAR formations.

But XV648 will remain dark blue throughout the anniversary year as it flies SAR missions from the Cornish air station. It will also be appearing at numerous Fly Navy 100 events and air shows throughout the year.

Across the Services, 96 Sea Kings continue to fly on Search and Rescue, airborne surveillance and commando troop carrying missions.

Since 1969, the Sea King fleet has clocked up 1.3 million hours (more than 148 years...) in the service of the nation.



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins, RNAS Yeovilton

Rising to the challenge

SAILORS from HMS Ledbury took advantage of a period of TLC for their ship to head to Herefordshire and their namesake market town.

The ship's company spent two days in Ledbury – between Gloucester and Hereford – catching up with locals and, more importantly, restoring RN sporting pride.

Last summer, the inaugural Ledbury Challenge Cup was contested by Ledbury Town FC (who play in the premier division of the West Midlands (Regional) League) and HMS Ledbury (who, er, don't).

The locals triumphed 4-2 (on penalties) in that inaugural encounter, leaving team manager ET(ME) Sean 'Bootstrap' Blaker as sick as a parrot.

Well, now he's over the moon, for the return match saw the matelots, led by PO(WEA) Matthew 'Bruce' Lee, scrape a 6-4 victory on a very muddy New Street pitch and get their mitts on the silver trophy.

Meanwhile, CO Lt Cdr Chris Nelson, navigator S/Lt Rob Garner and ABs 'Jim' Bowen and Sam Wisher said 'hello' to the residents of a care home and a brain injury ward in the adjacent hospital.

The ship enjoys links with the market town going back to the previous ship and WW2, although strictly speaking she's named after the Ledbury hunt... which received a visit from the sailors on the second day of their stay in Herefordshire. They dropped in on the kennels, while a few more adventurous chaps went on to follow the hunt.

As for the ship, she's undergone some maintenance following several months away with NATO at the end of last year, plus improvements to her high pressure air and electricity generating systems.

Next up is a spell of OST (aka 'beasting' according to the ship's company) under FOST in Faslane.



Deaths

Cdr Stephen Peacock. HMS Nelson. January 14. Aged 47.

Rear-Admiral Courtney Anderson CB. Joined the Navy 1930; trained in cruisers serving in Repulse during the Spanish Civil War. Volunteering for coastal forces early 1939, he began a distinguished operational career as a motor torpedo boat captain in the 10th MTB flotilla. After months on anti-invasion patrol the flotilla was shipped via the Cape to Alexandria and in the waters around Crete the wooden-hulled MTBs were attacked and Anderson retreated to Cyprus with two other remaining boats, here he found himself in command of two Swordfish torpedo bombers; the flotilla was diverted to Syrian waters where one of his Swordfish sank the Vichy destroyer Chevalier Paul. Next sent to the North African coast to escort ships until the last of the seven MTBs were sunk in 1941. Returned from the Med in 1943, served in anti-submarine sloops Stork and Scarborough before commanding Wyvern (MID for the sinking of U714 off the Fifth of Forth in March 1945). CO of Loch Killisport during the liberation of the Dutch East Indies; Intelligence Officer to the Flag Officer commanding British Naval Forces, Germany until 1949 then spent two years at the British Joint Staff Mission, Washington; head of section in the Naval Intelligence Division 1955-57 and naval attaché, Bonn 1962-64. His final posting was as Director Naval Recruiting and Flag Officer, Admiralty Interview Board. He published numerous articles and short stories as well as a lively autobiography, *Seagulls in My Belfry* (1997). He was appointed CB in 1971. December 8. Aged 92.

Rear-Admiral Edward Gueritz CB, DSC. First to sea in 1938 and after war was declared was in HMS Cumberland supporting the battered cruisers Achilles and Ajax off the River Plate; her arrival persuaded *Kapitan zur See* Hans Langsdorff in Montevideo to scuttle Graf Spee. In 1940 he joined HMS Jersey, the Med, support for Malta convoys; with Force K ships in 1941 Jersey struck a mine and sank, blocking the entrance to Grand Harbour and suffering 35 killed. Awarded his first DSC as a beachmaster in the assault near Diego Suarez and the occupation of Madagascar in 1942. In 1943 he was a senior beachmaster training for D-Day; ashore in Normandy for 19 days until wounded (awarded a Bar to his DSC). Post war he was 2IC of Saumarez when mined in the Corfu Channel incident. Promoted to captain in 1959, was Captain of the Fleet in the Far East 1965-66 and as a rear-admiral he was admiral president of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich and commandant of the Joint Warfare Establishment; retired in 1973. He was director and editor-in-chief to the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), and 20 years as a specialist adviser to the House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, president of the Society for Nautical Research and on the Board of War Studies, London University. Vice-president of the RN Commando Association and the J and K Destroyers Association, member of the Association of RN Officers. His publications include joint editorship of books on the Third World War, terrorism and civil defence against nuclear attack. He edited *Brassey's Defence Year Book* from 1977-81. December 21. Aged 89.

Capt Peter Jackson. Went to sea as a 16-year-old with Alfred Holt's Blue Funnel line; as a junior officer he helped ferry the British Expeditionary Force to Cherbourg and took part in the Norwegian campaign, and made repeated crossings in June 1940 to bring back troops from Dunkirk, Brest and St Jean de Luz. Whilst sailing in Mentor he was torpedoed north of Cuba (May 1942) and was adrift for five days before being rescued. He obtained his master's certificate in 1948 and was master of Queen Elizabeth 2 during the Falklands War. He was on leave when he heard that his ship had been requisitioned to carry troops to the South Atlantic so he returned and over eight days he oversaw QE2's conversion to Southampton to troop carrier. He chose 640 Merchant Navy volunteers to man QE2 and she steamed unescorted, via Freetown and Ascension Island, to Cumberland Sound in South Georgia. Her speed enabled her to reach the South Atlantic in only 12 days but once there he slowed and switching off his radar and radio he navigated by eye among the icebergs, zigzagging to avoid detection by submarines. He crept into anchorage and transferred his troops and 2,000 tons of stores and ammunition to waiting ships and embarked 650 survivors from two ships, Ardent and Coventry – in less than two days QE2 was on her way back to Southampton. When he retired in 1983 he had spent 36 years under the Cunard house flag. December 24. Aged 86.

Cdr the Rev Lord Sandford DSC. John Cyril Edmondson was accepted as a late entrant at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. During WW2 he served in Ajax in the Med in operations against the Italian Navy and co-ordinated Malta. As gunnery officer of Eskimo, awarded the DSC after an action in May 1943 during the blockade that prevented Axis forces from escaping from Tunisia. In 1944 he was 2IC of Cattistock when wounded during action against German vessels escaping from Le Havre. After the war he was appointed to Saumarez and was wounded during the Corfu incident. Later posted to Mercury; then House Officer at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth and added to his sporting activities by becoming master of the Britannia Beagles. He subsequently served in Vengeance, Cleopatra and was Flag Lieutenant to Admiral Sir Charles Lamb, C-in-C Far East Fleet 1953-55. His final appointment was 2IC of the submarine depot ship Tyne, at that time Home Fleet flagship when his service was shortened by ill health. January 13. Aged 88.

Sir Russell Wood. Joined the Navy on his 18th birthday in 1940 and was accepted for pilot training as a Leading Airman rating first at Luton, Bedfordshire and then Ontario, Canada. Promoted to acting midshipman he returned to Yeovilton qualifying as a Fulmar pilot joining the frontline 809 NAS based in Orkney in 1942. The squadron embarked in Victoria providing air defences in the Mediterranean (Operation Pedestal). Later the squadron was retrained to a photo-reconnaissance role and took part in the Allied invasion of North Africa; distinguished himself by being in the first Allied aircraft to land at Maison Blanche airfield and report its capture from the Vichy French. 809 moved to Seafires, joined the light carrier Unicorn for the landings at Salerno in September 1943 (Operation Avalanche). Embarked in Stalker May 1944 at the age of 22, he was now the longest surviving member of 809 NAS, he then flew dive-bombing missions with the RAF in Italy and returned to Stalker

flying in support of the Allied invasion of the South of France; twice awarded a mention in dispatches. After ground-attack operations in the Aegean, as a lieutenant RNVR he was posted to St Merryn, Cornwall as an instructor. After the war he continued to serve in the RNVR, later the RNR attaining the rank of Lieutenant Commander and being awarded the VRD in 1964. After qualifying as a chartered accountant he was appointed Deputy Treasurer to the Queen in 1968, appointed MVO (1973), CVO (1979) and KCVO on his retirement in 1985. December 15. Aged 86.

Lt Cdr Stanley George Solley. Joined Ganges 1951 as Boy Seaman and trained as a Telegraphist serving in Solebay, Truelove, Birmingham, Terror (Kranji, Singapore), Whitehall and Jamaica. Advanced to Acting Petty Officer 1957 and served in Paladins as PO Telegraphist then as Radio Supervisor in Ark Royal, Fulmar and Hartland Point (Singapore based). Underwent Sub Lieutenant training course at Mercury, promoted and served in Plover and President (wireless station, Whitehall). Promoted to Lt 1969 and appointed to Mauritius (Mauritius Island) as Deputy Officer-in-Charge as Lieutenant (SD); then Operations Officer at Commcen Whitehall and senior communications officer Kent. Further training at Greenwich then appointed as Staff Communications Officer to Staff of Flag Officer, Medway (Chatham) and promoted to Lt Cdr 1980. Staff of Flag Officer, Gibraltar additionally as Signals Officer to the Governor and C-in-C Gibraltar. Final appointment as Officer-in-Charge RN Commcen Whitehall and Deputy CO St Vincent in the rank of Lieutenant Commander (SD) retiring 1985. December 27. Aged 73.

Lt Cdr Geoffrey Brooke. Attended Dartmouth aged 14. He served in the battleship Nelson when she hit a mine laid by U31 at Loch Ewe but escaped unscathed; then navigator of the destroyer Douglas where he discovered that he suffered chronic seasickness in small ships. Appointed to the battleship Prince of Wales he was in the standby director of the 14-inch guns in May 1941 when she was hit, killing many on the bridge and putting the main director out of action; he took control of her guns, firing salvoes until Bismarck left (Hood was sunk), by the end of the year Prince of Wales was part of Force Z at Singapore, she was overwhelmed by Japanese air attack and received several torpedo hits and sank, the crew were rescued by Express. Appointed to Bermuda he took part in the North African landings and Russian convoys then Indomitable when the Fleet Air Arm raided the Japanese-held refineries at Palembang on Sumatra 1945 followed by Formidable that was twice hit by kamikazes; he was awarded the DSC for putting out the fires afterwards. 1982 he produced and illustrated with his contemporary photographs a book entitled *Alarm Starboard!* And in 1989 another book *Singapore's Dunkirk*. Association of RN Officers. January 6. Aged 88.

Second Officer Audrey Roche. Joined the WRNS in 1940 becoming a cipher officer. She was a Third Officer and one of three Wrens aboard the submarine depot ship Medway in 1942 when the ship was torpedoed by U372; she had been swimming for some time when she saw two men clinging together, one supporting the other that didn't have a lifebelt so she pulled off her own and put it on the drowning man enabling him to stay afloat until he was rescued; she was eventually plucked from the water by the crew of Zulu. She was nominated for the Albert Medal (since replaced by the George Cross) but was turned down and instead awarded a Mention in Despatches and is thought to be the only woman decorated for wartime bravery at sea. She worked on the staff of the captain of the 1st Submarine Squadron in Alexandria and in Portsmouth where she rose to Second Officer. January 13. Aged 90.

Reginald D Jones. Chief Yeoman of Signals. Joined Royal Hospital School at Greenwich aged 11 then to Ganges leaving as Signal Boy. Served in Dauntless (cruiser), Tiger, Caradoc, Champion, Rosemary, Centurion (battleship), Cormorant, Express, Fermoy, Verity, Kempenfelt, Dainty, Capetown, Gazelle, John and Wakeful and many establishments including Norfolk (USA), Hong Kong and Sydney. January 9. Aged 97.

Peter Lance 'Plum' Marriott. LRO(G). Served 1956-65 in Ganges, Maidstone, Mercury, Terror (Kranji), Victory, Wizard and Maralinga (Australia). February 7.

John Barnes. CERA. Served 1939-46 in Thames minesweepers Mallard, Cardiff and Steyner. Royal Naval Engineer's Association. January 5. Aged 91.

Dennis 'Taff' Rowland. CPO AA1. Joined Hood Division 1943 and served 30 years in Theseus, Indomitable, Albion and Hermes and at Sanderling (Abbotsinch). Goldcrest (Brawdy), Daedalus, Falcon (Malta), Merlin (Donibristle), Peregrine (Littlehampton), Seahawk, Blackcap (Stretton) and Osprey. He was attached to 1 Flight Army Air Corps, BAOR (1964-66); he oversaw three mobile workshops manned by naval personnel that maintained the AAC helicopters and left the Navy in 1972. Hood Division Association. January 17. Aged 81.

Surg Lt James Arcscott Raleigh Bickford. Joined the RN 1942 and served in Goathland and various hospital ships including the Aorangi that was requisitioned as a hospital ship from the New Zealand Shipping Company during WW2 and actively involved in D-Day. January 15. Aged 91.

Brian 'Wilky' Wilkinson. LRO(T). Served 1961-76 at Ganges and Mercury and in Wizard, Ausonia, Sea Eagle, Eagle, Victory, HMY Britannia, Dolphin, Diomedea, and Rothesay. January 19. Aged 63.

Michael 'Spoke' Ward. REL(AIR). Served in NAS 812 (Black Flight), 813 and 814 and Ocean, Glory, Vengeance, Implacable, Ariel, Gannet, Falcon and Daedalus. 14th Carrier Air Group Association. January 12. Aged 79.

Lt Philip John 'Jack' Pope. CENG. Joined as ERA c. 1945 and served in Mediterranean in 50s. Promoted Greenwich 1961. Served at Manadon, Ark Royal, Hydra, Terror, KD Malaya and Barrack Master Pembroke. Retired 1981. January 12. Aged 80.

Ken Fry. HMS Cheviot 1953 and a member of the association. December 20.

Edward Ashley-Smith. MEI 1957. HMS Cheviot association. January 22.

Robert 'Bobby' Graham. L/Seaman. Served in Exeter 1941-42, survivor of the Battle of the Java Sea and also the Prisoner of War Camp at Macassar Celebes. January 20.

John Dennis 'Pete' Kane. LSM. Served 1948-56 in Superb, Swiftsure, Birmingham (Korea), Maenad and Vidal. January 10. Aged 79.

Harry Leader DSM. AB Seaman. Served 1941-46. One of only 10 survivors of MTB

622 lost off the coast of Holland 1943. Severely injured he was rescued by German naval craft VP 1300 and spent many months in Dutch and German hospitals before being incarcerated in a Prisoner of War camp deep in Germany. After several hair-raising 'incidents' he and other inmates managed to escape and reach the advancing Allied army and was eventually repatriated back to the UK. Coastal Forces Veterans Association and the Royal British Legion. December 28. Aged 81.

John Pointer. L/Steward. Served in Loch Fada, Newcastle and Montclare. Loch Fada Association. January 6. Aged 80.

Bob Bourne. POME. Served in Tyrin, Contest, Sheffield, Soberton, Zest and Ulster. Loch Fada Association. January 5. Aged 73.

Basil 'Bungy' Williams. POA/FE. Served Peregrine (813), Heron, Fulmar and Blackcap. Active musician in many Bluejacket dance and military bands. January 26. Aged 80.

Norman Wild. AB. Served in trawlers Lord Plender and Othello WW2. January. Aged 84.

Eric Heyward. Torpedoman AB. Served Grenville and Matchless. Grenville and 25th Destroyer Flotilla Association. January 27. Aged 83.

Elfed Rees 'Ted' Lewis. CPO. Served 1938-68 at Ganges and in Iron Duke, Norfolk (Bismarck/Scharnhorst actions and Russian convoys), LST3711, BYMS 2015, Victorious, Jamaica, Apollo, Mounts Bay, Opossum, Loch Lomond and Kent. October 19. Aged 85.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Henry Robert 'Bob' Parham. PO Tel. Served Faulkner 1940-43 and Paladin 43-46. Arctic Convoy Association and President West Ham RNA. January 8. Aged 86.

Harold Halsey. Seaman. Hostilities only serving in landing ships and craft and with Combined Operations in North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, Anzio and the Normandy landings. Buxton and High Peak branch. December 22. Aged 84.

John 'Knocker' White. Served 1938-45 in Iron Duke and Norfolk in the Atlantic and Arctic including action against the Bismarck. Joined the RN commandos and took part at Juno beach, also involved in the liberation of Antwerp. Ganges Association, Uxbridge RNA, North Russia club and Normandy veterans. January 5. Aged 86.

Leonard Evans. Served in Thane, Jackdaw, Bitter (with 811 Squadron FAA), Shrike, Vindex and several convoys to Russia. A founder member of Desidee branch.

John 'Jack' Harding. AB. Joined the RN at age 16 after supplying a false age. Served WW2 until 1945 in Far East and Arctic convoys; ships included Kempenfelt, Dagenham RNA. December. November 24. Aged 84.

Douglas Ford. LEM. Joined the RN as a boy and served 12 years electrical branch. Consort during Yangtze incident and illustrious in Korea. HMS Consort Association and Lichfield RNA. November 19. Aged 78.

John Kipling. Chief Yeoman. Joined Ganges and served 1937-60. Part of a naval unit sent to organise the evacuation at Dunkirk on board Wakeful, he returned on Margate lifeboat then to Chatham Barracks and after discharge served for a period at GCHQ. A founder member of Falmouth RNA.

Stan Scarsbrook. Stoker. Chairman Carterton & District RNA. January 6.

R D 'Roy' Grant. AB UC3. Submariner. Joined Ganges as Boy seaman 1947. Served in Wrangler (1948-50), Roebuck (1950-51); and submarine Tradewind (51-53). Vice chairman Carterton RNA and member of Oxford City Submariners Association. January 25. Aged 77.

Lion Detenant. Carterton & District branch.

Vincent 'Vince' Alfred Doddington. A/LAM(L). Served FAA 1942-46 on 768 Squadron and at C&M Nairobi. Bexhill-on-Sea RNA and Daedalus branch FAA Association. January 9.

Thomas 'Tom' Nevin. CPO ERA. Served 1942-56. ERA Training School Victory, Freemantle (Ceylon), Sultan (Singapore), Belfast, Beachy Head, Jamaica, Vernon, Montclare, Pembroke, Osprey, Duchess and Grey Goose. Bexhill-on-Sea branch. January 22. Aged 82.

George 'Nobby' Clark. AB. HSD Portsmouth. Served 1942-53 in submarines L26, Uther and Voracious. Hanworth RNA and Pembroke House RNBT. December 8. Aged 85.

Thomas 'Tom' Finlay. Able Seaman. Served in Raleigh, Defiance, Drake, Golden Hind, Glory and Friendship. Londonderry RNA and Algerines Association. January 22. Aged 85.

Dennis Duffy. CPO Steward. Served in Victory, Glasgow, Landguard, Birmingham, Illustrious, Implacable, Gannet, Bellerophon, Urchin, Ariel, Lynx, Osprey, Daedalus (FOWMAC 1962-67). Retired as Admiral's Chief Steward. Londonderry branch. January 31. Aged 82.

Ray Quail. Stoker/Mech. Served 1944-47 mostly in minesweepers (Algerines) European, Mediterranean and Pacific operations in Rowena and Moon. Derby RNA and Algerines Association. January 23. Aged 82.

June Sansom. WRNS. Beccles branch. January 23. Aged 83.

Alfred Pannell. Beccles branch. January 21. Aged 84.

Bert Buckley. FAA. Runcorn RNA. December 31. Aged 82.

Eunice Dobson. WRNS. Served 1943-45 in Lemso. Treasurer Halifax branch. January. Aged 85.

Edwin Dobson. POEM. Served 1942-46. Royal Arthur, Vernon, Pembroke and LST Baganza. Halifax branch and husband of the above. February. Aged 84.

Vivian 'Viv' Wilmshurst. PO. Served 1939-54 at Ganges, WW2 in Warspite and Arctic Convoys. Perth, Western Australia, RNA and Arctic Convoys Association. February 7. Aged 84.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS
Lt H Ackerman. Served in Hornbill, Bellerophon, Tyne, Vernon, Dolphin, Ariel and Victory.

Lt Cdr D O Dykes. Served in Jervis, Royal Sovereign, Danae, Foxhound, Undine, Zanzibar, Diadem, Mercury, Cleopatra, Devonshire, Drake, Ganges and Newfoundland.

Major J H Haycock RM
Cdr S M Howard. Served in Malaya, Grafton, Birmingham, Pegasus, Trouncer, Ravager, Smiler and Devonshire.

Lt Cdr C A Inman. Served in Forth, Venus, Loch Vyne, Cochrane, Minerva, President and Warrior.

Cdr M B Jermyn. Served in Indomitable, Dalrymple, Orion, Raleigh, Ocean, Jewel, Cochrane and Drake.

Surg Capt. R S McDonald. Served in Duke of York, President, Tiger, Terror, Ganges and RN Hospitals Trinco, Malta, Plymouth and Haslar.

Capt. D W Napper. Served in Vanguard, President, Excellent, Carron, Lincoln, Rhyll, Ganges and Terror.

Lt Cdr A H Smith. Served in Obedient, Loch Fada, Blackcap, Ocean, Shalford, Rampart and Victory.

Commissioned Airman E N Stranding. Served in Merlin, Furious, Neptune, Daedalus, Eagle, Falcon, Blackcap, Hornbill, Excellent, Vulture, Victory and Siskin.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
D 'Danny' Anscombe. CPO Coxn. Served in submarines 1947-63 in Ambush, Token, Auriga, Selene and Alcide. Welsh branch. Aged 85.

J F 'John' Cayzer. LEM. Served in submarines 1965-68 in Opossum and Tiptoe. East Kent branch. Aged 67.

J 'Jim' Kelly. L/Tel. Served in submarines 1940-54 in H33, Oberon, Voracious and Tally-Ho. Basingstoke branch. Aged 84.

Lt A 'Anthony' Sanderson. Served in submarines 1948-51 in Trenchant, Statesman and Tabard. Dolphin branch. Aged 80.

FLEET AIR ARM ASSOCIATION

Lt Andrew Linsley. Served RN 1959-75; prior to this he served in the Merchant Navy. Initially joined the FAA for pilot training but later transferred to Observer training. Appointed as FD02 for the last commission of Hermes in 1969 then served as Staff Officer 845 NAS; his last appointment was running the Dunker Training facility at Seaford Park becoming one of the Navy's leading experts in Sea Survival in particular helicopter ditching procedures. After retirement he turned his considerable talent into voluntary work for Naval Aviation Heritage in particular the RN Historical Flight, giving regular talks and presentations which is estimated to have generated over £25,000 for the Historic Flight. Yorkshire and Daedalus branches of the FAA Association. January 14.

Reginald 'Reg' Veale. L/AF(E). Served FAA 1943-47. He embarked on the cruise liner Empress of Scotland for Australia and subsequently joined Arbitr 1945 heading to Ponam Island in the Pacific where he spent several months with MONAB 4 during WW2. Secretary Bristol branch FAA Association since 1994 and life member since 2002. When Daedalus closed in 1996 the Paying Off pennant was entrusted to Reg for presentation to the FAA Museum at Yeovilton which he presented June 13 1998. January 15. Aged 86.

Stanley Arthur Macfarlane 'Black Mac'. CPO(Air) AE. Joined FAA 1943 and served for 27 years in WW2 and afterwards in Implacable, Theseus (807 Squadron Korean War), Bulwark and Eagle; also at RN Air Stations Stretton, Lossiemouth, Culdroe and Sembawang. Twice president of the Chief's Mess at HMS Daedalus 1958-61 and 1968-70 and one time Hockey Umpire to the FAA. Essex branch FAA Association and Standard Bearer for Harlow RNA. January 8. Aged 84.

Patrick Hamblin. NAM(A&E). Served FAA 1942-46 in Illustrious. Hanworth branch FAA Association. December 27.

THE FISGARD ASSOCIATION
Christopher Docherty. HMS Fisgard 1951, Series 13. November 15.

David Barnes. REA(Air). Joined HMS Fisgard 1959, Series 37. Served for 24 years in Collingwood, Ariel, RNAS Hal Far, RNAS Lossiemouth, Eagle, Osprey, Hampshire, Fife and Daedalus. December 12. Aged 65.

Colin 'Birdie' Wren. HMS Fisgard 1954, Series 20. November 29.

David Scott. HMS Fisgard 1962, Series 44. December 15.

W E 'Bill' James. HMS Fisgard 1950, Series 8. December 16.

Ronald Braund. HMS Fisgard 1957, Series 30. December 20.

F G 'Fred' Lewis. 1932 Benbow. December 31.

L J 'Len' Wells. 1943 Duncan. January 4.

Ron Morris. HMS Fisgard 1954, Series 21. January 6.

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in April's Noticeboard must be received by **March 12**

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 RN and RM Service records: 023 9262 8779 or 023 9262 8667
 Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
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 Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Ask Jack

HMS Centaur: I am trying to find out the burial place of Stoker John Johnson, who was serving on the light cruiser HMS Centaur in 1930. He was stabbed to death in Danzig, Poland on July 12 1930. Anyone still out there who might have a clue, please contact Jack Johnson at john@johnrobinson3.wanadoo.co.uk or write to 44 Loweswater Avenue, Tynesley, Manchester, M29 7EG.

Fleet Air Arm, 767 NAS: I am seeking information or memorable items regarding 767 Squadron in the Fleet Air Arm. Now in my 86th year, I am trying to conclude my wartime history. I spent four years in Bomber Command before transferring to the FAA. Contact Sidney Beck, 97 Bentley Road, Uttroxtet, Staffs, ST14 7NG.

HMS Stonehenge: I am researching my father's Naval history. Thomas Dunne joined as a boy in 1919 and died at Benghazi in 1941. He was serving as a telegraphist in HMS Stonehenge in 1920 when she was wrecked. Where can I get a record of the enquiry or details of the sinking/wrecking? I found then that he was posted to HMS Actaeon from March 1921 to March 1922. This, I believe, was a Torpedo School shore base at Sheerness. His home base was always Chatham. Why would a telegraphist spend a year at such a base? If you can help contact Malcolm Dunne at malcolm@dunne.go-plus.net or tel 07940 851888.

HMS Zest: I have a small 'trophy exchange' pennant inscribed with the ship's crest, name and motto 'British Far East Fleet'. There is no date but it would have been used in the ship when in the Far East and based in Singapore circa 1965. Anyone interested should contact Cdr Rex Phillips on 01243 431326.

Assignments

Cdre A S Bell to HQBF Gibraltar as Commander British Forces Gibraltar from February 17.

Capt S J Ancona to USCSG as Commander Carrier Strike Group on April 28 and to be promoted commodore.

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Frank Sutton Taylor



We seek contact with former ship-mates or comrades who knew my Father in HM Royal Navy WW II

Name: **Frank Sutton Taylor**
 Rank: **Able Seaman**
 Service No: **JX 324358**
HMS DAUNTLESS
 17 June 1942 - 10 April 1943

HMS SCARAB
 11 April 1943 - 15 September 1944
HMS BIRMINGHAM
 16 September 1944 - 29 July 1945



NOTICEBOARD

Reunions

MARCH 2009

RN Communications Association: AGM and annual dinner will take place March 6-7 in Inverness. For more details contact the chairman, Sam McFarlane on 01634 684817.

APRIL 2009

HMS Dido Association: Reunion – April 17-19 at the Copthorne Hotel, Plymouth and hosted by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Plymouth. For more details contact Colin Bates at secretary@hms-dido.com or see the website at <http://www.hms-dido.com> or write to 223 Sheldon Heath Road, Sheldon, Birmingham, B26 2UA.

HMS Ramillies Association: Hold their annual reunion at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth, April 20-24. Further details from Mrs D Marks. 3 Kendal Avenue, Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire, FY5 2LY or tel: 01253 826300.

Lt Cdr Ian Fraser VC Service of Thanksgiving: A Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of Lt Cdr Ian Fraser VC DSC RD* RNR will be held at St Martin in the Fields Church, Trafalgar Square, London at 1430 on Wednesday April 22, followed by a reception on site. Dress for the occasion will be Ceremonial Day Dress without sword (1Bs) or a Lounge Suit with medals. Admission to the Service will be by ticket only. Those wishing to attend are invited to contact Jennifer Taylor at Jennifer.Taylor864@mod.uk or 023 9262 5110.

MAY 2009

HMS Tenby Association: will be holding its 16th annual reunion at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry, May 1-4. Contact the hotel direct on 02476 334171 or contact Ken Jones at krhysjones@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01752 406326.

Fieldgun Reunion (All Divisions): Stretton Hotel, Blackpool (01253 625688), May 8-10. Contact Tom Wallbank at fieldgunner58@hotmail.com or tel: 01524 840471.

HMS Ambuscade Association: Reunion May 8-9 at the Royal Hotel, Crewe. A fun packed weekend of activities have been planned and we are expecting a bumper turnout so please book early. Contact Mark Brocklehurst at mark@sharplesgroup.com or tel: (weekdays) 01925 839592.

Royal Naval Engineerroom Association: 17th annual reunion and 40s night on May 16 at the Nautical Club, Birmingham. Details

from Bob Styants at bobstyants@btinternet.com or tel: 0121 422 4115.

HMS Beaver: Seaman Branch (Global 86) reunion, May 16 in Bolton. Anyone interested to contact myself, Paul 'George' Nolan at paulnolan228@hotmail.com or tel: 01204 597104 or mob: 07834 157399.

Corfu Channel Naval Association: HM Ships Saumarez, Volage, Mauritius, Leander, Ocean, Corfu Channel incident, October 22, 1946. Reunion takes place at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry, May 22-24. All ranks and commissions and friends are welcome. Full details from Elaine Evans at gerardee@aol.com or tel: 07737 429848.

HMS Hood Association: AGM at 1600, 34th anniversary reunion dinner at 1900 on May 23 at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth. Memorial Service at St George's Church, Portsea at 1145 on May 24. Service of Commemoration at St John Baptist Church, Boldre, near Lymington at 1100 on May 17. Further details from vice-chairman, Keith Evans on 01428 642122.

JUNE 2009

HMS Blackcap, RNAS Stretton: Any shipmates or civilian staff who were here between 1942 and 1958 are invited to the 21st annual service of Commemoration at St Cross Church, Appleton Thorn at 1200 on June 7. Standards are very welcome. For more details contact Bernie Cohen at b.cohen2@ntlworld.com or tel: 0161 946 1209.

JULY 2009

Jungly Cocktail Party 2009: This year's Jungly Cocktail Party will take place on Saturday July 4 at Hazlegrove House, Sparkford, Somerset. The event is open to all officers past and present who have served in the Commando Helicopter Force. Tickets and information are available from 847 NAS, RNAS Yeovilton: email 847lo@yeovilton.mod.uk or phone (01935) 456342/6262.

SEPTEMBER 2009

HMS Duke of York Association: Annual reunion and AGM will be at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry, September 4-6. Details from the secretary, Rose Cottage, 103 Orchard Park, Elton, Chester, CH2 4NQ or tel: 01928 725175.

HMS Fisgard: S37 joined September 1959. 50th anniversary reunion to be held onboard HMS Belfast in Pool of London on September 12 (evening). All ex-boys and

partners most welcome. For further details contact Peter Ashley at picasar87@hotmail.com, tel: 023 9257 1346 or Mike Baker mike@longbowbcl.com or Dave Bateman at dave.bateman1@btopenworld.com or Derrick Cornwell at dwandccornwell@yahoo.co.uk.

OCTOBER 2009

HMS Arethusa Association: 21st reunion October 2-5 at the Lion Hotel, Crickieth, North Wales. All Arethusa families welcome. Contact Tom Sawyer at roland.sawyer@btinternet.com or write to Honorary Secretary & Founder, HMS Arethusa Association, 6 Sycamore Close, Slingsby, York YO62 4BG or tel: 01653 628171.

HMS St Brides Bay 1944-61: Reunion October 9-10 at the Leyland Hotel, Leyland, Lancs. For details contact Jeff and Margaret Vardy, 13 Meadow Grove, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 5TW or tel: 01773 875950.

HMS Troubridge last Commission 1966-69: 3rd annual reunion October 16-17 at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@yahoo.com or write to Reliant Realty Group LLC, 10031 Bergin Road, Howell, MI 48843, USA

RNR Postal & Courier Branch: Reunion will be at the Shanklin Hotel, Isle of Wight, October 16-18. If you would like to attend or require further information about the association contact Nobby Clark at rex.w.clark@btinternet.com, tel: 07713 155575 or write to 12 Bentinck Way, West Lynn, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3LZ.

Undine & Urchin Association: The 2009 reunion of the Undine & Urchin Association in company with Ursa, Ulster, Ulysses, Urania and Undaunted, will be held at the Westminster Hotel, City Road, Chester during, October 16-19. For more details please contact Secretary, Chris Heslop at chris@cheslop.plus.com or tel: 01229 826227.

HMS Ships Eagle, Undaunted & Excellent Reunion: Reunion for Eagle (1952-72), Undaunted (1944-74) and Gunner Branch Association (HMS Excellent) will be held in Torquay, October 23-26. £110pp for three nights. Contact John Bryant, 47 Lavender Way, Bradley Stoke, Bristol, BS32 0LR or tel: 0117 947 0122.

Safety Equipment & Survival Association: Reunion to be held October 23-25 at Bosworth Hall Hotel, Market Bosworth, Leicestershire. Please contact Secretary Gordon 'Pixie' Parkes at gordon.parkes@ntlworld.com or tel: 01483 823181.

HMS Llandaff Reunion: Takes place in Coventry from October 30 to November 2. All ex-Llandaffs are welcome. Please contact 'Slinger' Wood on 020 8581 5693 or 07961 124459 or visit the website at <http://www.hmsllandaff.co.uk>.

NOVEMBER 2009

HMS Bacchante: 40 year reunion to be held at the Nautical Club, Birmingham on November 13-14. Accommodation will be available at the Edgbaston Palace Hotel, Birmingham. Further details are available from Andrew Thomas at andrew.thomas@

bigfoot.com or the website at <http://www.hmsbacchante.co.uk> or tel: 01889 570358.

JANUARY 2010

RNH Haslar, September 1970, PTS 24: A picture of myself and my fellow QARNNS State Registered Nurse Student Classmates can be found on the Navy News website – www.navynews.co.uk. The picture was taken in the Training Division at RN Hospital Haslar in 1970. I would like to find them in time for the 40th anniversary of us all starting our training in 2010. I would be grateful if anyone in the picture, or anyone knowing the whereabouts of any of PTS 24 Class would please contact me on david@sudcotes.karoo.co.uk. The class: back, I to r: Maggie Batch, Susan Hunt, Susan Prescott, Liz Sears, Liz Morgan, Liz Birch, Sheila McFadyen, Jill Moles, Jill Stubbs, Nicola Barnard; middle, I to r: Carl Fell, Sue Firth, Mary Early, Catriona Graham, Rowan Phillips, Ann Hendry, Rowena James, Brenda Taylor, David Rawson; front, I to r: Pamela Wright, Ann Tyson, Margaret Bridgeman, Ann Roberts, Margaret Woodhead, Maggie Day, Ann Cahill, Penelope Johnson, Susan King. Tel: 01482 781690.

FEBRUARY 2010

HMS Penelope Reunion: February 19-20 2010. For details of the reunion and AGM or membership contact the secretary, Mike Bee at mike.bee@ntlworld.com or write to Secretary, HMS Penelope Association, 1 Oddfellows Street, Mirfield, WF14 9AB.

Sports lottery

January 17: £5,000 – ABWS R S Halls, HMS Kent; £1,500 – Sgt S A Robinson, 845 NAS Yeovilton; £500 – Lt M J Round, HMS Collingwood.

January 24: £5,000 – Mne M Whittle, FPGRM; £1,500 – AET P J Hillman, 814 NAS Cudrose; £500 – LOM J L J Caruana, RNAS Cudrose.

January 31: £5,000 – Mne R L Barrett, 42 Cdo RM; £1,500 – PO K Airs, DE&S Andover; £500 – POAEM L S B Latchford, 845 NAS.

February 7: £5,000 – Mne P J Flynn, RAF St Athan; £1,500 – Mne R J Hopkins, 40 Cdo RM; £500 – POAET L R Fox, 847 NAS, Yeovilton.

February 14: £5,000 – LWEA C J L Palmer, HMS Manchester; £1,500 – Lt A L Storey, HMS Nelson; £500 – AB A J P Johnson, HMS Ark Royal.

Where are you now?

HM Britannia: Seeking Gordon R Johnson. We first met on board Britannia in 1953 and kept in touch throughout our naval careers until 1971. He was then at HMS Sultan and I was at HMS Daedalus. I left the Navy in 1971 and I believe Gordon got promotion to Master at Arms. If you know of Gordon's whereabouts could you contact Mr F Paterson at 34 Hayes Road, Cadishead, Manchester, M44 5BU or tel: 0161 775 7160.

Chalky White: Has a photograph of himself in glasses and a fellow shipmate holding a camera, both taking a cigarette break (photo on website). Chalky served between 1939 and 1945 and would like to hear from the shipmate in the photo, though he cannot remember his name. Chalky was a Stoker Mechanician serving in HMS Atheling, Adamant, Victorious and Bermuda. A Guz rating and demobbed at Chatham. Please contact Chalky at brenda.white@tesco.net or tel: 01780 753787.

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: On the lookout for new members to join us from both the cruiser and the frigate. Wives and partners are also welcome. We have 270 members and the subscriptions are only £6 per year. If you are interested in joining then contact the secretary Warwick Franklin by email at warwick.franklin@hotmail.com or tel: 01752 366611.

HMS Condor, Arbroath: In July this year it will be the 50th anniversary of my joining the Fleet Air Arm and was fortunate to be enrolled in 50 Class, Air Engineering. I say fortunate because in my opinion I was lucky enough to be in the company of collectively the finest group of lads ever seen together in one unit. Where are you all now, lads? I wonder if any of you are interested in getting in touch for a possible reunion. Some names I remember are: Pete Beasley, Trevor Foster, Dave Owen, Mike Elliot, Tim Ridgeway, Jock Robertson, Ian Harrison,

George Armstrong, Rob Taylor, Roy Meakin, R Smith, J Webb and apologies to a few whose names have dimmed over time. Please call Bill Hughes on 01407 831362.

HMS Ganges 1959: Members of '46 Mess, Exmouth Div joined Ganges in March 1959. Chris Bell is trying to contact as many old class mates as possible with a view to a 50th anniversary reunion in Ipswich in March this year. He has managed to contact 15 so far but would love to have contact with any others. The reunion should be unique in that our old Class Instructor 'Jack' Cornwall will be taking the 'parade'. Please contact Chris Bell at chrisj.bell@btopenworld.com or tel: 01461 600678.

Royal Naval Patrol HQ, Stonehouse: Seeking a shipmate who was based at the RNP HQ at Stonehouse, Plymouth in 1951. He was awaiting his draft to the Regulating School. This rating took two photographs of me, one in the wireless room and one outside of Patrol HQ. I hope I am successful in finding him, though we are both in our 80s now. Contact John James Ramsey, 43 Pennine Crescent, Redcar, North Yorkshire, TS10 4AE or tel: 01642 487396.

HMS Scarborough: Seeking Colin 'Robbie' Roberts, he was an M(E)1 and served on Scarborough at the same time as me. I know he transferred to submarines and on leaving the Navy, he ran a public house, which he sold upon retiring. Contact Lionel Harness at stables_harness@gmail.com or tel: 01787 280165.

HMS Troubridge last commission 1966-69: Looking for ex Troubridge warriors. You won't believe how many we have found. Contact Bryan Pace at Romft1@yahoo.com or write to Reliant Realty Group LLC, 10031 Bergin Road, Howell, MI 48843, USA.

HMS Zinnia: Brother of signalman Fred Teale, would like to hear from any survivors of the corvette that was torpedoed August 23, 1941. Please contact Eric on 01926 513199.

Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

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March 1969

DEFENCE Secretary Denis Healey offered up some hope to the Fleet Air Arm that fixed-wing aircraft might not disappear entirely from the Naval scene, although to quote *Navy News'* own emotive words "Though the Fleet Air Arm's carrier force must die..." The Defence Secretary when questioned about the future of the Harrier within the Fleet asserted that air defence was to be taken over by land-based aircraft, helicopters and missiles. But he did note that the improvements in the Harrier engine made it "something worth looking at for flying from ships." Indeed.

March 1979

IN a story that picks up on this month's Ark Royal IV poster, *Navy News* promised a new home for the 16-stone silver bell which sailed the world with the fourth Ark. The decision was taken to show it at the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton. However the City of Leeds had also expressed a keen interest in the bell, as its citizens who invested more than £9million in Warship Week in 1942 had particularly close associations with the carrier. The museum had based its claim on a meeting in Gibraltar the day after the loss of the third where £500 from the canteen money had been put up for the purchase of a new bell to stay with the ship in commission or to go to the air station holding the HQ of the FAA.



● HMS Endurance in the ice in January 1989

March 1989

ICE-SHIP HMS Endurance suffered a 4ft split when damaged by a submerged ice floe while operating 600 miles to the south of the Falkland Islands. The ship's company contained the damage swiftly and the Red Plum made for Deception Island where the crew carried out a temporary repair. Divers from the Spanish Antarctic vessel Las Palmas helped the British sailors work on their ship. Once confident in her seaworthy condition, the ship returned to continue operations before later going to King George Island for further examination and repairs.

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Tue 10 Mar 09: 1000-1200
RRC Rosyth, Building 3016
HMS Caledonia.
To register please call
01383 425960
or email rrcrosyth@ctp.org.uk

Thur 12 Mar 09: 1000-1200
RRC Plymouth, Building
S027A, HM Naval Base,
Devonport.
To register please email
rrcplymouth@ctp.org.uk

Mon 16 Mar 09: 1000-1200
RRC Portsmouth, Rodney
Block, HMS Nelson.
To register please call
02392 724595
or email gtyrrell@ctp.org.uk

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You should be suitably qualified in respect of the position you are applying for and in addition, be self motivated and hard working.

The position requires you to be medically fit with a current ENG 1, have basic computer skills and live within a reasonable commuting distance of the location to allow for late finishes and early starts to the working day or be willing to relocate to the area.

Closing date for applications is 31st March 2009.

To apply please send your CV and covering letter, clearly stating the position you are applying for to:

Claire Summerill, HR Officer, C-Crew, Unit 1, Brunel Lock, Cumberland Basin, Bristol, BS1 6SE
c.summerill@smit.com
www.smit.com



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● The Williams enjoying the opportunities of family life at the beach in New Zealand

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Visit the website, www.navy.mil.nz/join-us/uk, or see the ad on page 41 for more information.

The RNZN Recruitment Team will be in Faslane on March 9, Rosyth on March 10, Plymouth on March 12 and Portsmouth on March 16 as well as attending CTP Job fair in Portsmouth on March 5.

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Common interests served by merger

A FORMAL link between the Marine Society and the Sea Cadets Association was perhaps inevitable by the time the new millennium was under way.

The organisations had similar objectives and operated in similar areas – overlaps which had been present to greater or lesser extents for decades.

So it was in 2004 that the two groups merged to form the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC), Britain's largest maritime charity, with the aim of providing support and personal development opportunities in a maritime context for youngsters and professional mariners.

Not only does the organisation promote careers at sea, both military and civilian, by highlighting the wide range of opportunities available, but it also helps support the wellbeing of mariners through channels such as the College of the Sea.

The College ensures those working at sea have advice, support and access to learning opportunities which is similar to those who work ashore, using distance-learning packages and financial support specially tailored for professional seafarers.

The MSSC is one of two principal sponsors of the Sea Cadets, the other being the MOD, which in the last financial year contributed 65 per cent of the MSSC's total income of almost £13.2 million (of which £1.8 million was funds raised specifically for the new power training ship Jack Petchey).

The bulk of MOD funding is connected with training, but there is also the provision of RN staff and civil servants at Sea Cadet HQ and at area offices.

Each of the 400 or so Sea Cadet units is an individual charity, charged with raising as much as possible to cover the running costs of its own facilities, including heating, lighting, electricity and insurance.

This works out at about £10,000 to £12,000 per unit annually, or almost £1,000 every month.

Helping in the task of spotting and exploiting fundraising opportunities are the various regional branches of the MSSC, in which volunteers plug away at generating the income required to keep local units going.

By way of example, the Sea Cadet Association in Scotland – essentially the Scottish branch of the MSSC – is exploring ways of expanding the level of funds raised ten-fold, to around £40,000 annually.

This would allow the branch to make an average annual grant of £1,000 to each of the 38 units north of the border.

For more information on the MSSC and Sea Cadet Association, on donations, and branches, see www.ms-sc.org

An inspector calls...

INSPECTOR Jim Gordon, of Grampian Police, was the VIP guest at Stonehaven unit's annual awards evening.

The best cadets of 2008 were LC Kerri Johnston (16-18), AC Michael Smith (14-16) and OC Calum Stephen (12-14), while the best in the Junior section was Leading Jnr Isobel Groom.

The Bella Christie BEM Endeavour Trophy for the best overall runner-up went to AC Andrew Hayes, while LC Michael Smith won the Martin Thomson Memorial Trophy for greatest contribution to sporting events – the award is named after the victim of a road accident in 2005.

POC Anne Elliot received the 2008 Burgee on behalf of the unit – the 26th year running Stonehaven has won this efficiency award.

Peterhead crowned top unit in the Corps

A UNIT in the north of Scotland has claimed the title of best in the Corps for 2008.

Peterhead, on the east coast, has won the coveted Canada Cup for the first time in its history – news which provided the icing on an anniversary cake.

For TS Caledonia also celebrated its 70th birthday during 2008, so

to win its first major trophy in such fashion has been the perfect end to a big year.

Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Ian Wilson RNR said: "I am immensely proud of the staff and cadets, and to the support from the Unit Management Committee and local community, in our efforts to keep Peterhead a unit to be proud of."

"It is a credit to all involved and the icing on the cake of what has been a fantastic 70th anniversary year for us."

And the Canada Cup was not the only piece of silverware to nestle in the unit's trophy cupboard as they look back on a busy and successful year.

TS Caledonia also retained the

Stephenson Trophy, awarded to the top unit in the Northern Area after annual inspections by the Area Officer and District Officer – which opened the way for the ultimate prize, competed for by the best unit from each region.

But there has also been sadness as well as celebration.

One of the unit's former Commanding Officers, Lt Cdr Sam Allen, has died after a career which saw him serve both the RAF and Sea Cadets.

Originally from Ireland, Sam's Service career saw him first fly as aircrew in Vulcan bombers, then move on to become a technical teacher.

He joined TS Caledonia in 1976 as a Civilian Instructor after moving from Arbroath, and he rose up to take the helm at Peterhead between 1982 and 1992.

He then went on to serve as District Officer Grampian between 1992 and 1996.

He is survived by his wife Sena, sons Bruce, Murray and daughter Leslie Ann.



Michael is gold star

A CADET from Southend unit has been presented with his Duke of Edinburgh Award gold badge – aided by his maritime skills.

LC Michael Hawkins (above) has been a member of the TS Rebel yacht-racing squad for four years, and used his time there to notch up three-day bronze and silver expeditions as skipper of a seven-metre Hunter Sonata, planning all the logistics, navigation, moorings and safety along with his crew.

Having achieved his RYA Day Skipper qualification, Michael then led a crew on the 35ft offshore sailing yacht TS Leopold Muller for a five-day trip.

London Area Officer Cdr Paul Hains presented Michael with his award, and also handed an award to L/Cpl Chris Williams for his leadership qualities.

'We're best in England!'

HOT on the heels of Peterhead unit when the results of the Canada Cup were judged was Northampton and Wellingborough unit.

The cadets from the East Midlands towns had to settle for runner-up spot when Captain Sea Cadet Corps Capt Jonathan Fry made his decision.

For their efforts they were awarded the Thomas Gray Memorial Shield – and the fact it was piped to top spot did not dampen the unit's spirits.

"I am proud of the continuing efforts of the team of cadets and adult volunteers at both training ships Diamond [Wellingborough] and Laforey [Northampton]," said CO Lt Chris Read.

"The teamwork and effort that everyone gives shows

what can be achieved in a volunteer organisation.

"We have a good mix of serious and fun activities for our cadets and they always do their very best."

Lt Read added: "We can also lay claim to being the top Sea Cadet unit in England!"

The shield will be presented to the combined unit in May – the Wellingborough satellite was set up as a result of Northampton's success in previous years.

This is the second time in three years that the unit, based in Rushden, has won the shield.

And as with Peterhead, the runners-up spot also brought with it a Stephenson Trophy identifying TS Laforey (and TS Diamond) as the best unit in Eastern Area.

This is what Sea Cadets is all about...



BRADFORD unit's chaplain Jon Howard was one of the three winners in the 2008 Corps Photographic Challenge, sponsored by the Naval Photographic Club.

The aim of the competition is to "tell the Sea Cadet story", and the Bradford bish captured the moment by chance while on a course with cadets at the Sea Cadet training centre TS Ganges in Holyhead.

Mr Howard, along with a number of cadets from TS Aurora, was working towards a Royal Yachting Association certificate in sailing at the Welsh facility when he rattled off a number of snaps.

"All the cadets were having such a great time and I just took a number of photographs, not realising at the time that this competition existed," said Mr Howard.

"But when I did, I thought this one image summed up just what it means to be a member of the Sea Cadet Corps."

Mr Howard won the President's Trophy for the best photograph by an adult, while the Tod Trophy for the best photograph of any Sea Cadet activity was won by LC Andrew Koropisz, of Stockport unit, for a study of a group of cadets high above sea level.

The third winner was Cdt Andrew Lincoln, of Chelmsford unit, who won the Antony Preston Memorial Trophy for the best photograph of a ship.

The ship in question was TS Iveston at Tilbury in Essex, during a unit training weekend based on the former RN minesweeper.

● Chaplain John Howard's picture of a RIB at speed at Holyhead (above) won him the President's Trophy in the Sea Cadet Corps' Photographic challenge; Cdt Andrew Lincoln won the Antony Preston Memorial Trophy for his study of TS Iveston at Tilbury (left) while LC Andrew Koropisz climbed way above sea level to take his Tod Trophy-winning photograph (below)



Illustrious visitors call in at Colchester

COLCHESTER unit hosted the two liaison officers from their affiliated ship, HMS Illustrious.

At the end of evening colours, Lt Fiona MacDonald made a number of presentations to the cadets, watched by her shipmate PO Lawrence.

Amongst the presentations were an Essex District Canoeing achievement recognition, won by OC Daniel Mitchell, and a Jack Petchey award – with a cheque for £300 for the unit – to OC Steven Blowers.

TS Colne Light now has three PO cadets – Josh Syrett, Sam Brazier and Joe Brazier.

This is the highest rank a cadet can achieve in the Corps, and it takes a lot of hard work and effort on the part of the individuals concerned.

To have three in one unit is unusual, according to the unit, and the first time it has happened at Colchester.

Dawn makes great progress

LAST year was a special year for the Ton Class Award at Huddersfield unit.

Thanks to Collin Brett and the Ton Class Association a brand new trophy was presented to the unit.

The Ton Class Award has been a big part of Huddersfield's annual prizegiving ceremonies for many years.

The award is presented to the best able cadet in the unit, and for 2008 that proved to be AC Dawn Stewart, who was judged to have shown exceptional advancement during the year, both in rate and confidence.

The association also provided an engraved boatswain's call so AC Stewart can now pipe to her heart's content at home as well as at the unit.

AC Stewart is now concentrating on her advancement to leading cadet.

Hull and Filey 'go foreign' with P&O

A GROUP of Sea Cadets from Hull and Filey units sailed to foreign shores courtesy of P&O Ferries.

The 11 youngsters from TS Iron Duke and TS Unseen, along with two staff and the North and East Yorkshire District Officer, met up at the Hull HQ and travelled to King George Dock to meet up with Senior Master Dave Miller.

Once they had been checked in and taken on board, Senior Master Miller gave them a comprehensive guided tour of the 32,000-tonne Pride of York, their home for the next two days.

Staff were allotted two-berth cabins while the cadets shared four-bed rooms, and once sorted it was time to change from No 1s into working rig for allocated duty stations on the first night.

But first to supper – and the quality (and quantity) of food was just the ticket.

The group split into three teams for their duties.

The first, led by the OIC of Hull unit, S/Lt (SCC) Jacqui Gorman RNR, included the four female cadets, and they went to explore the galley, first aid room, shop and reception.

They also saw the most expensive cabins, though any thoughts of an upgrade were quickly scotched.

District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Tanner RNR led a group of four male cadets to the bridge, where they were on hand as the ferry was taken out of King George Dock – all thoroughly enjoying the experience.

The remaining three male cadets and PO(SCC) Simon Turner, Instructor at Filey unit, went down to the engine room.

The three groups met up 'after hours' in one of the ship's many relaxation areas and chilled out until it was time to turn in.

There were some restless sleepers – the weather was calm, however the vibration of the ship



● Hull and Filey unit Sea Cadets and staff on the bridge of the P&O ferry Pride of York

took a little getting used to – but all were up early for a delicious breakfast then the teams went to their next station, swapping round from the night before.

Once Pride of York had docked in Zeebrugge the cadets changed back into No 1s and caught a bus to Bruges for sightseeing and shopping (not least for the chocolate).

With cold, wet weather the order of the day, the various shops provided welcome respite until it was time to get the bus back to the ferry terminal and another change back into working rig.

Some of the group ended up in the ferry's cinema where they

joined in with the cast of *Mamma Mia!*, but the prospect of another busy morning prompted them to turn in and get a good night's sleep.

The last swap between duty stations saw the girls head down the engine room, under the care of Senior Chief Engineer Jamie Simpson.

"I found it very hot and noisy and can't imagine anyone having to work there for any length of time!" said S/Lt Jacqui Gorman.

"The girls were in their element, asking question after question."

Half-an-hour out of Hull the group packed and prepared to disembark – two of the Hull cadets

had to hightail it to school for an exam as soon as the ferry docked.

Luckily for them the Pride of York arrived on schedule.

"The whole experience was brilliant and very worthwhile," said S/Lt Gorman.

"The cadets gained a lot of knowledge and experienced a snapshot of life on board a ship as one of the crew."

"All of the crew on the Pride of York were brilliant and made us very welcome – they couldn't have done any more for us."

"I am sure that all of the future Eastern Area Sea Cadet units that get the chance to go on the trip will have a fantastic time."

Enterprising youngsters

THE cadets of TS Enterprise have celebrated the achievements and activities of the past year with their annual 'Stars of Enterprise' awards ceremony – which includes a public 'thank you' to their supporters.

The CO of the Bristol (Avonmouth) unit, Lt (SCC) Barbara Hillier RNR, said: "The cadets have had a very busy year. We have several awards open

to those who give us assistance.

"This year the Charles Ekins Memorial Cup was awarded to White Watch from Avonmouth Fire Station."

"This was in recognition of their giving up a great deal of their time over a period of a number of weeks to teach some of our senior cadets the art of fire-fighting."

Lt Hillier added: "It was particularly significant to have fire-fighter Zac Garrett of White Watch as Zac was a former TS Enterprise Sea Cadet and a Royal Navy radar operator aboard HMS Danae."

Other awards include a barrel made from a rare piece of the old wooden warship HMS Ganges, a replica of the medal awarded to

officers present at the Battle of Trafalgar and cups and shields in memory of past instructors and other benefactors.

A Captain of the Sea Cadet Corps Letter of Commendation, the highest and most rarely-given award for a cadet, was awarded to LC Hillier for his swift thinking and flawless application of his first aid training on an injured member of the public.

PO (SCC) Christopher Batt said: "The highlight of the evening was the computer slide show which had photographs of the literally hundreds of activities that the cadets undertook in 2008."

"2009 is off to a good start with the runner-up prize in part of the Avon District Drill Competition."



Hornchurch maintains supply of recruits

TWENTY and counting – Hornchurch and Upminster unit's record of sending cadets into the Armed Forces shows no sign of slowing down.

We reported in our January edition that when Katie Gibson (pictured above) passed out from HMS Raleigh in November she was welcomed into the RN by her two brothers, Charlie – who joined in January last year and is at HMS Sultan – and Bill, who joined in March 2004 and is with the Commando Logistics Regiment.

All three were members of TS Hurricane, and Katie was the 20th cadet from the unit to join up in the past eight years.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Mike Chittock RNR was the unit's Commanding Officer during those eight years, and unit staff believe he made a big impression on their careers and lives by instilling discipline and teamwork and encouraging skills in all water sports at all levels.

Indeed, some of the Hurricane cohort have gone on to participate in sports representing the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

The following are the Hornchurch 20: Capt Sutherland RM, Mne Kavanagh, Mne Wheeler, Mne M Thomson, Mne Marron and Mne R Thomson (all RM Commandos), OM(C) Martin, ET(ME) W Gibson, ET(ME) Bailey, Mid Pettit, ET(ME) C Lovett, ET(ME) Clarke, AET K Lovett and NA(SE) C Gibson (RN), Craftsman Cook (RE), Pte Kent (The Rifles, TA), Craftsman Lawrence (REME), Officer Cadets Behan (RN University Cadets, Officer Cadet Sahote (RN Engineering, Wellbeck), and finally Logs(Pers) Katie Gibson (RN).

And more cadets are due to join the Royal Navy at HMS Raleigh in the next few months.

And although Lt Cdr Chittock may no longer be so closely involved – he has been promoted Assistant District Officer for Essex – he will still take a keen interest in the progress of ex-Hurricane cadets.

Football triple

CHELMSFORD entered three teams in the Essex District five-a-side competition – and came back with three gold medals.

The Junior Girls, Junior Boys and Senior Boys teams swept all before them, taking the age group trophies and the overall winner's trophy as well.



● Marine Cadet Oliver di Bartolo flanked by the two Marine Cadet staff from the Ruislip unit TS Pelican, Sgts Ian Harris and Jon Jenkins

Oliver wins new trophy

MARINE Cadet Oliver di Bartolo has become the inaugural winner of the Gwen Scotney Trophy for sporting achievement at Ruislip unit.

Oliver's win was founded on a successful year in sailing and canoeing.

He was presented with his shield at a ceremony at Uxbridge RNA's headquarters in Hillingdon by Bill Mellow, chairman of the HMS Ganges Association (West London Division).

The trophy was donated by the Ganges Association, and Gwen's family attended the awards ceremony, as well as making a donation to unit funds.

After the ceremony, staff and cadets from the unit were treated to a buffet supper courtesy the members of the RNA.



● Clutching a handful of trophies for their efforts are Huntingdon unit cadets (from left) AC Rayner, OC Biederman, OC Critcher and Cdt Ratcliff. AC Rayner gathered most accolades, including smartest cadet, best shot and boat work, as well as acting as the Mayor's Cadet of the Year. Among the others handed out to TS Cromwell cadets were area five-a-side football trophies, and those for most improved boat work and most considerate senior cadet

Bradford members in the spotlight

MEMBERS of the Bradford unit have been taking a turn in the spotlight over recent weeks.

PO Kieran Kundi was one of around 500 cadets selected from across the country to join the special guard at the Trafalgar Day celebrations in London towards the end of last year.

Then PO Wayne Young heard that he is to receive the Gold Duke of Edinburgh award, and will shortly be going to London to have his award presented personally by the Duke of Edinburgh or Prince Edward.

Last, but certainly not least, PO Joanne Goodchild has received her Cadet Forces Medal for 12 years service, having joined at the age of 13.

PO Goodchild has a busy life; she holds down a full-time job as well as being First Lieutenant (the second in command) of the busy unit, in which she is a canoeing instructor.

She is also an Eastern Area Staff Officer Writer/Stores.

Stalwart mourned

A MAN who devoted almost half his life to the Corps died on Christmas Day at the age of 79.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Thomas Griffiths – known to his many friends as Ken – served in the Royal Navy for eight years, then spent 38 years working with cadets, including taking command of the Sefton unit, TS Starling, until his retirement in 1994.

He remained an important and valued member of staff and was still attending the unit, despite his ill health, until he was admitted to hospital last November.

A service was held at St Philip's Church in Litherland, followed by cremation at Thornton crematorium, and Lt Cdr Griffiths' family said they were humbled by the fact that some 400 people attended to pay their respects.

CPO (SCC) Kenny Griffiths, who has followed in his father's footsteps as CO of the unit, said: "For myself, I just hope that I can continue his legacy and live up to his high hopes for TS Starling and the Corps."

Ardrossan boasts disparate flotilla

PICTURED is a groups of cadets and staff on board one of Ardrossan unit's MOD-owned boats, the James Caird, once of the 1967-vintage HMS Endurance.

The boat now boasts the (relative) luxury of a wheelhouse.

The unit also has a fast motor launch, a 27ft motor whaler, a 24ft Cheverton motor boat and a Fairey Huntress, all boats which would have served on various warships.

The unit's First Lieutenant, CPO(SCC) John Macdonald, said there must be many similar boats still in use throughout the UK – presumably many in the care of Sea Cadet units.

Members of TS Gannet made the long journey south

to the London area thanks to one of their boats – the unit exchanged their 1931 Montague whaler for a stay on board HMS Belfast in the Pool of London – the whaler will now form part of a permanent exhibition on public display.

Three members of staff and 12 cadets spent five days on board, during which time they got afloat on London Area boats with CPO Townsend from

the City of London unit.

The Scottish cadets also paid a visit to Chatham Historic Dockyard, where they were able to go on board the Victorian sloop HMS Gannet, which is preserved at the Medway tourist attraction.

Their visit to Chatham and their unit's namesake ship was set up by Brenda Ingelwicz of the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

While in the capital the Ardrossan group called in at Sea Cadet HQ on Lambeth Road, but Captain Sea Cadet Corps Capt Jonathan Fry was away on holiday.

Not that it mattered too much, as Capt Fry returned the courtesy by visiting the Ayrshire unit during a trip north of the border.



Civic recognition for Sheffield's hard work

CADETS, staff and committee members of the Sheffield unit were treated to afternoon tea by the Lord Mayor of the city.

The team from TS Sheffield travelled to the Town Hall for the presentation of recognition awards, given in conjunction with the High Sheriff of South Yorkshire.

The unit's HQ was hit by serious flooding in June 2007, and it was on the official re-opening of

the premises last October that Cllr Jane Bird invited members of the unit to her civic parlour.

Cllr Bird and High Sheriff Dr Robert Bloomer wanted to show their appreciation for the outstanding work TS Sheffield does in offering so many opportunities to youngsters.

The Lord Mayor and the High Sheriff were also impressed with the way the cadets overcame significant difficulties when their training unit was flooded last

summer, thanking them for their efforts and attendance during the autumn and early winter of 2007, when much of their HQ, undergoing major restoration work, was unheated and lit only by emergency lighting.

Cllr Bird said: "I'm extremely proud of all these young people and all their achievements with the Sea Cadets."

"This is a wonderful example of how young people can succeed by taking part in positive activities."

"The activities offered by the Cadets enable them to flourish and grow."

The dignitaries presented awards and certificates to the cadets, who also enjoyed a tour of the Town Hall and Council Chambers.

The unit's first major event at its HQ after the flooding was its annual Royal Navy Parade, when HMS Hallam Association presented its ship's bell to TS Sheffield after recovering it from the archives of Sheffield Cathedral.

HMS Hallam was for many

years Sheffield's Royal Naval Reserve training centre, until it was decommissioned in 1992.

In 2000 ex-members of the ship's company – Hallamex – purchased the bell from the MOD, and recently decided that it should be presented to Sheffield Sea Cadets.

In the presence of Cdr Smith RN, Eastern Area Officer, and Stuart Chapman, chairman of TS Sheffield, the bell was presented to TS Sheffield's Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Simon Dunn RNR by HMS Hallam's former CO Lt Cdr Reg Horner RNR (Rtd).

The bell was mounted in the Sheffield unit's memorial corner and will be tolled each year on the anniversary of the sinking of HMS Sheffield during the Falklands conflict in 1982, as well as during Remembrance week.

The unit also received a painting of the Type 42 destroyer HMS Sheffield presented by the Sheffield RNA, which they in turn had obtained from the MoD.

QE2's final master helps raise funds

A FAMOUS mariner was the star turn at a fundraising evening on Tyneside which raised money for two maritime charities.

Freemasons from the Morden Lodge in Northumberland raised more than £1,200 at a black-tie event held at the Newcastle East Masonic Temple in Byker.

And the main benefactors of the evening were the RNLI and Newcastle East Sea Cadet unit.

Almost 50 freemasons and their guests enjoyed a three-course meal, "traditional Geordie songs" and a raffle.

Guest speaker was Capt Ian McNaught, the final Master of Cunard's famous liner QE2.

Sunderland-born Capt McNaught told an appreciative audience facts and figures about the Cunard flagship as well as anecdotal tales of his life at sea.

A fascinating question-and-answer session followed the talk. The liner was handed over to her new owners, Nakheel Hotels in Dubai, last November, and the process of converting her into a floating hotel and leisure centre at Palm Jumeirah has begun.

Mike Burch, chairman of TS Jellicoe, was delighted with the donation which the unit received.

"The RNLI and ourselves are very grateful for the fundraising efforts of Morden Lodge," said

Medal surprise for padre

A SURPRISED padre was awarded the Cadet Forces Medal during the West Yorkshire Sea Cadets District Trafalgar Parade.

Chaplain (SCC) David Earl RNR, of Huddersfield unit, received his medal from Lord Saint Oswald during the parade and service in South Elmsall.

The Rev Earl was delighted at receiving such a prestigious award, telling the congregation it came as a complete surprise.

The applications for the medal had been submitted by Huddersfield chairman Lt Cdr Reg Horner RNR, and kept quiet right up until the presentation.

Lt Cdr Horner commended the work that Rev Earl had done for Huddersfield unit over the years.

The padre started parading with TS Highburton during the 1980s, officially joining as unit chaplain in 1989.

Outside the Corps, although now formally retired from his parish, David still works hard within the local community as a Chaplain of Huddersfield Royal Infirmary and sitting on a multitude of committees.

Boat takes name of benefactor

HIGHLIGHT of the Scarborough unit's recent special parade night was the unveiling of a new dinghy named in honour of one of the unit's main supporters.

Parents families and friends gathered to see cadets receive awards for their efforts during the past year.

Then came the unveiling of the Pico dinghy complete with towing and launching trolley.

The boat has been named Shirley Williamson in recognition of the fundraising efforts of regulars at the Leeds Arms pub where Shirley Sheader (Williamson's middle name) is the landlady.

At the end of September Mrs Sheader presented the unit with a cheque for £1,500 to help purchase the sailing vessel – one of many donations made by the Leeds Arms.

Mea culpa...

IN THE report on the Remembrance ceremony in Poole Park in our January edition we inadvertently swapped the names of the Parkstone and Poole units' training ships – Parkstone is TS Dolphin, and Poole is TS Drax.

Which means it was the Parkstone unit that supplied three in the colour party and one laying a wreath – and Sarah Burton is admin officer of the Parkstone unit.

And while we are on the subject of slips of the finger, the CO of Merton unit is Lt Cdr Chris Lowe RNR, not Rowe. Sorry!



● MORE than 270 North West Area staff and cadets had the chance to go on board aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal during her visit to Liverpool. She had carried 50 staff and cadets from Portsmouth – all had a great time, despite some lumpy seas – and in their place members of Huyton with Roby, Ellesmere Port, Tameside, Stretford, City of Liverpool and Sefton units provided help for the Corps recruiting trailer and guiding the general public during ship open to visitors. And cadets from as far afield as Cumbria, as well as more local units such as Rochdale, were given tours of the flat-top

Archaic. Sluggish. Legend.

IT IS hard to imagine today's generation of aircraft inspiring lyricists (there's not a lot you can rhyme with JSF...), but the Swordfish provoked *The Stringbag Song* (to the tune of *My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean*...):

*My Stringbag flies over the ocean
My Stringbag flies over the sea
If it weren't for King George's Swordfish
Where the hell would the Royal Navy be?*

The lyricist had a point.

Without the Swordfish, the Italian Navy would have been free to roam the Middle Sea.

Without the Swordfish, the Bismarck would have reached port in France.

Without the Swordfish 350,000 tons of enemy shipping would not be lying on the ocean bed.

Without the Swordfish, guns, fuel, shells, food, engines would have reached Rommel and allowed him to drive on Cairo.

All of which – and more – is evident in Donald Payne's very human **Swordfish: From the Cockpit No.10** (Ad Hoc, £19.99 ISBN 09469-58689), a beautifully-produced, wonderfully-illustrated homage to the Stringbag.

Payne's book is a mix of anthology, history and photographic tribute. His 210-page work is crammed with excellent images (mostly from private collections and hence unseen) charting the Swordfish's decade-long career, plus page upon page of illustrations of the aircraft in its numerous liveries and variations.

There was a lot not to like about the Swordfish.

It was horrendously sluggish (a cruising speed of 85kts – just 98mph). The cockpit was exposed to the elements (although a modified enclosed version appeared later in life), the forward machine gun had a "pitiful" rate of fire.

It began life in the mid 1930s as a 'private venture' – an aircraft offered to Whitehall by industry. While Hawker and Supermarine were working on monoplane designs, Fairey hoped to win over the Admiralty with a biplane spotter aircraft which could also deliver "a sting in its tail".

They did, although anyone involved in naval aviation conceded that this new biplane, the Fairey TSR (Torpedo-Spotter-Reconnaissance) – subsequently renamed Swordfish – was "archaic", "outdated", an "anachronism".

That said, the Swordfish was also "a wonderfully forgiving aircraft," writes the author. "I always

had the feeling that if I did something wrong, she would simply give a sigh of resignation and keep flying straight and level."

The pilot was joined in the cockpit by an observer and by the telegraphist/air gunner or TAG.

TAGs were lower deck. Pilots were officers. The two only 'mixed' when in the aircraft. They inhabited different parts of a ship, did not mingle when they went ashore, and never really got to know each other.

"At the time I thought this wrong,"

writes Payne. "Sixty-five years later, I still think it wrong. We all flew in the same aircraft. We were chilled by the same winds, bludgeoned by the same seas, fired at by the same ack-ack."

They were and they paid a heavy price. Of the 2,000 or so TAGs in the Fleet Air Arm (most of them in Swordfish) nearly 450 were killed.

Almost 300 TAGs were decorated, among them the late Les Sayer who earned the DSM for attacking the Bismarck in May 1941.

Sayer's unit, 825 NAS was "probably the least-prepared torpedo squadron" afloat, he conceded.

Sayer was its chief air gunner – and one of the few experienced TAGs in 825; many of his shipmates were fresh out of training.

825 had an ace up its sleeve – Lt Philip 'Percy' Gick, the leading torpedo attack instructor in the Fleet Air Arm.

Gick made two passes at Bismarck, the second caught Hitler's flagship by surprise. The torpedo struck the battleship amidships, while her guns vainly tried to engage the Swordfish. All they did was throw up huge spouts of water which ripped away the fabric on the fuselage.

With typical British understatement, Sayer observed: "We had a rather cold trip back."

Understatement characterises most of the many first-hand accounts which pepper this fine book.

Observer S/Lt Edgar Lee recalled being "in a pickle" during the Channel Dash.

The 'pickle' Lee describes was an umbrella of Focke Wulf 190s and Me109s swarming around the obsolete Swordfish trying to attack the Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen.

Lee's gunner was killed, his pilot was badly wounded by shrapnel, the aircraft in front plunged into the Channel before his Swordfish began the run-in on the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen.

From 1,200 yards the aircraft dropped its

torpedo then turned away, flying directly over the last German destroyer in the line. "After they had given us a stream of lead, we were looking like a flying colander."

The flying colander ditched about half a mile from the German ships. Lee managed to get his pilot into the dinghy, but not the body of the TAG, who went down with the Swordfish as it sank.

The two men were eventually rescued by a motor boat – obviously British because "it was flying the Jolly Roger, something that I calculated would be beyond the German sense of humour".

It was only back at Manston that Edgar Lee realised he was the only man in his squadron left; the rest were dead or wounded.

Life at sea aboard carriers offered little protection from the horrors of war.

In the spring of 1943, 816 NAS – largely Swordfish with a sprinkling of Seafires – was working up off Arran, ready to escort a convoy with the Battle of the Atlantic approaching its climax.

Many of the aircrew were enjoying a cuppa in the wardroom when there was a thump-like noise, the lights went out and all sound of machinery running ceased.

Lt Cdr Brian Bennett donned his life jacket and headed for the flight deck with smoke billowing through the ship and Dasher increasingly sinking by the stern.

On deck, he found the ship's company jumping over the side – a good 60ft to the Firth of Clyde. Bennett waited, preferring to float off Dasher as she went under – which he did.

"The last I saw of her was the bow passing over my left shoulder," he recalled.

"Puffs of black smoke began appearing in the water and shortly the sea was ablaze."

Of the 116 men in NAS, 91 died – mostly ground crew or 'troops'.

For all the drama, for all the excitement/horror, of combat, most Swordfish sorties were tedious, cold, numbing anti-submarine patrols and convoy escort duties.

"Flying over miles and miles of ocean with no friendly points of land to show where you are is an awesome experience in poor visibility," Lt Bill Pennington

recorded in his diary in October 1943.

"You realise just what sort of hope you have of ever being picked up if you have to ditch."

Many did ditch – one of Pennington's comrades vanished on a routine patrol shepherding a convoy to the Azores.

Amid such hardships, the daily prangs, aircraft overdue, comrades missing, it's hardly surprising that aircrew lived life to the full.

When Bill Pennington arrived in the Azores, there was plenty of beer, dancing, fresh food, more beer, some local firewater, wine, and plenty of curious locals.

But after a few days the men were itching for action.

There was talk of an impending U-boat battle. "Sounds exciting." It proved to be more of the same: prangs, missed opportunities, Atlantic storms, the odd glimpse of a U-boat.

And yet for all its shortcomings, for all the tedious patrols, the Stringbag inspired air and ground crew like no other machine in the first 100 years of naval aviation.

"I have a lot to thank this aircraft for," writes Lt Cdr John Moffat, veteran of the Bismarck chase.

"I know of no other aircraft that would have survived taking off and landing in the Force 8 gale, and with the deck pitching 60ft."

"I have experienced flying the aircraft with most of the lower wing and under fuselage canvas in tatters and with a self-sealing tank that had a large piece of shrapnel embedded in it."

Donald Payne agrees.

"Other aircraft may also have been fun – and a lot more comfortable to fly – but if it is pitch dark, sleeting and blowing a gale and the deck of the carrier is rising and falling like a dummy horse on a roundabout, the only aeroplane in which I would ever wish to be in is a Stringbag."



● Three rocket projectile Fairey Swordfish during a training flight from RNAS St Merryn in the summer of 1944. Note the invasion stripes on the aircraft's wings and fuselage.

Picture: Imperial War Museum A 24983



Crime and no punishment

MENTION 'war crimes trials' and one name immediately springs to mind: Nuremberg.

Yet the trial of leading German figures in 1945-46 was not the first time Germans had faced a court on war crimes charges on their native soil.

A generation before, German servicemen faced judges in Leipzig – except the judges were their kinfolk.

Critics of Nuremberg – with some cause – have branded it 'victors' justice'.

Leipzig was 'losers' whitewash', no more evident than the case of the men of U86.

In June 1918, with the scales of war on the Western Front in the balance, the Canadian hospital ship HMHS Llandovery Castle was heading for Liverpool to collect yet more casualties of the fighting in France.

Brightly illuminated, large red crosses on her bridge and hull, the ship was 115 miles south-west of Fastnet when she was rocked by an explosion – torpedoed by U86.

Llandovery Castle sank in less than ten minutes. Those who survived the sinking cling to lifeboats amid the wreckage.

Oberleutnant zur See Helmut Patzig, U86's captain, ordered the lifeboats run down, and even turned his guns on the survivors.

Just 24 people survived the loss of Llandovery Castle; more than 200 went down with her.

A few days later an armed merchant cruiser passed the site where she went down. The sea was littered with the corpses of nurses which were now being carried across the sea by their billowing aprons and skirts which had dried in the summer sun to form sails.

The Allied press demanded justice. "An affair like the sinking of the hospital ship Llandovery Castle was so unspeakable as still to bring a gasp of surprise from all around the world," the South African Nursing Record fumed. "Surely, there is nothing to do with a beast like that but annihilate him completely."

It would be three years before the survivors of the Llandovery Castle had their day in court. Patzig had fled, so two junior officers faced trial.

The court blamed the absent Patzig (who, oddly, could be found by Hitler's Navy and served the *U-Bootwaffe* throughout WW2) and sentenced his two accessories to just four years in prison (they served just four months, mysteriously escaping from jail...).

The bitter fate of Llandovery Castle (and the even more bitter aftermath) is recounted by Stephen McGreal in *The War on Hospital Ships 1914-1918* (Pen & Sword, £19.99 ISBN 978-1-84415-8584).

It is an unrelentingly compelling – and depressing – story of hospital ship after hospital ship running aground, striking mines, being torpedoed. By day or night, the sign of the Red Cross offered little, if any protection.

The Germans invariably refused to accept that hospital ships were hospital ships, convinced they doubled as troopships. The British complained of a succession of 'Hun outrages'.

Suitably outraged, in the spring of 1917 the British government dispatched bombers to terrorise the inhabitants of the university city of Freiburg. There were few signs of humanity in WW1.

TWENTY years ago Brian Lavery published a landmark book – *Nelson's Navy* – which examined the ships, the men and the organisation of the Royal Navy during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars comprehensively.

Last year I had the pleasure of reviewing in these pages its sequel, *Churchill's Navy* which gave similar treatment to the Navy of World War 2. Both were produced by Conway Maritime Press, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Now Conway's up-and-coming rival Seaforth of Barnsley has published a similar work on the Navy of the mid to late 17th Century – *Pepys's Navy: Ships, Men and Warfare 1649-1689* (£40, ISBN 978-1-84832-014-7).

Its author – one of the two leading experts on the 17th-Century Navy – J David Davies has chosen Samuel Pepys, the increasingly important civil naval administrator of the period, as the name on which to hang his work.

As Dr Davies says, Pepys's writings are key sources for the period but he has also used a wide variety of other material to provide a wider perspective for his comprehensive guide. Indeed, there was really no alternative to Pepys; the two obvious alternatives Cromwell and James Stuart, Duke of York (later James II) only cover parts of the period under review.

The Grove Review

The fact that an Admiralty civil servant is the most representative figure of the period also reflects an important point that the author rightly stresses. This was a key period in British naval history when "the navy became a permanent national institution, equipped with larger warships, fighting with new and more effective tactics, commanded by an increasingly professional officer corps, and administered by a comparatively committed set of men and a relatively effective set of institutions."

The book's layout and structure is based on the Lavery *Nelson's Navy* volume, which allows direct comparisons easily to be made between the periods.

The sailing navy evolved perhaps more than some might think and it is fascinating to see how much changed between 1689 and 1789. Because the reader is likely to be less well informed on the naval history of this earlier time, Dr Davies has devoted more attention to strategy and tactics.

There is an excellent and up-to-date chapter on the evolution and development of the line of

battle from the 'figure of eight' and 'charging' tactics used previously.

This is followed by accounts of an engagement from each of the Dutch Wars, Scheveningen of 1653 – "one of the most crushing victories in British naval history"; the battle of Lowestoft in 1663 – "one of the most blue blooded battles of the age of sail" with the Duke of York and heir to the throne in command; and the Battle of the Texel of 1673, which ended in bitter recriminations between the

uneasily allied English and French fleets and which contributed to "popular Francophobia" that "accelerated the transition from perceiving the Dutch as the main national enemy to casting the French in that role."

This may have been a little less than fair as the Texel was the first time the newly rising French Navy had fought a line battle at sea.

Not least of the interesting aspects of the book are the chapters on foreign navies that provide one of the few easily-accessible guides to comparative naval organisation in this period of the establishment of recognisably modern permanent national maritime fighting forces.

Dr Davies has already written on the social history of the navy of this period and the conflict between the 'Gentlemen' of high birth

and the 'Tarpaulins', professional seamen of comparatively low social standing. One long-standing result of this is the qualifying examination for lieutenant introduced in 1677 that has ensured a more or less common level of expertise whatever the social class of the officer taking it.

Out of all this, Dr Davies argues, emerged a recognisably professional officer corps kept in being by half pay when not posted to a ship and promoted on the principle of seniority.

As a Welshman the author can take a dispassionate look at what to call the nationality of the navy of this period: 'English' or 'British'.

I have always tended to take the union of the parliaments of England and Scotland in 1707 as the dividing line but Dr Davies makes a cogent case that the term British is not inappropriate to his earlier period given the Cromwellian union and the connections between the Stuarts' two kingdoms. His Majesty's ships did fly 'the Union Jack' as King Charles II called it in 1674 and less well known, Scots were conscripted to serve in them.

Every aspect of 'Pepys's Navy', both ashore and afloat is covered in this magnificent and superbly-illustrated volume.

At £40 it might be deemed a little expensive but its comprehensive coverage makes it a mini library in itself. Perhaps, like the Lavery books, it will soon appear in paperback but if you do have the money and any interest in naval history do not wait, you will not be disappointed.

From Actium to Zeebrugge

IF THERE was an award for 'most illustrations in a naval book', R G Grant's enormous *Battle at Sea* (Dorling Kindersley, £25 ISBN 978-1-4053-3094-7) would win hands down.

In its 350-plus pages, the book breezes through three millennia of naval warfare from galleys to gunboats, Salamis to San Carlos, triremes to Trident.

Battle at Sea has been produced in conjunction with the Royal Navy (and Naval Historical Branch), but it is not British-centric.

Far from it. In fact, it's encyclopaedic. To be sure, all the naval battles you'd expect to find from 3,000 years of conflict are here: Actium, Lepanto, the Armada, Trafalgar, the Nile, Tsushima, Bismarck chase, Midway.

But it is the more obscure clashes – more obscure to Britons at any rate – which might be of greater interest and leave the reader wanting to explore in greater depth one day: the Japanese invasion of Korea in the late 16th Century, the bitter battles for supremacy of the Baltic in the 17th and 18th Centuries, the Second Schleswig War (1864, if you were wondering).

As you'd expect from a DK book, it's not in depth. It is, however, a book you can 'dip in' and 'dip out' of – particularly if you're the younger generation.

And it is copiously, copiously illustrated – photographs, paintings, diagrams, charts, maps, posters, newspaper cuttings.

Most work, although the 3D maps of some naval clashes seem to bear little resemblance to more traditional two-dimensional counterparts (the charts of Jutland are particularly baffling...).

That very minor gripe aside, this is a beautifully-produced book with some truly fabulous illustrations – the Japanese *Nihonga* paintings are a particular treat – and a worthy addition to any nautical buff's library.

Amphibious revolution

AN AERIAL bombardment to neutralise coastal batteries.

Naval guns pounding positions inshore.

A defender who knew one day the foe would come.

Ships crippled by mines.

Defeated troops streaming away from the front.

If you're thinking 'Normandy' and 'Overlord', you'd be wrong.

If you're thinking 'Oslo' and 'Albion' you'd be spot on.

The German invasion of the Baltic islands in the Gulf of Riga in the autumn of 1917 was the one truly successful amphibious assault of the Great War.

Unlike its brutal successor a generation later, the Eastern Front between 1914 and 1917 remains a fairly unknown war (even Germans call it *die vergessene Front* – the forgotten front).

And some battles in the East remain more forgotten than others – such as the Baltic operation.

Now, however, historians have begun to cast light where it is dark.

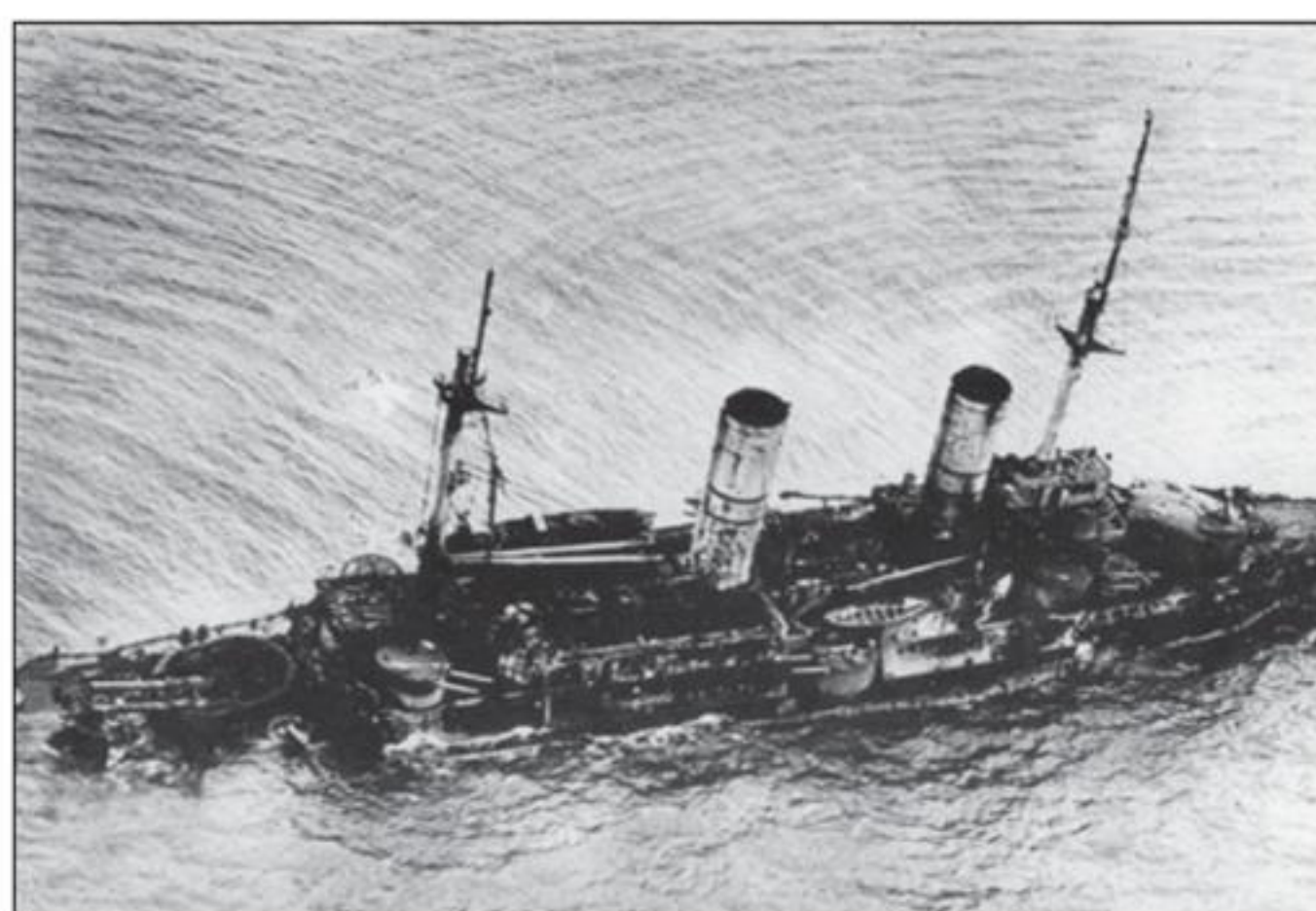
Last year saw Michael Barrett's impressive *Operation Albion* (reviewed in our August 2008 edition).

2009 sees Gary Staff's *Battle for the Baltic Islands 1917* (Pen & Sword, £19.99 ISBN 1844-15787-3).

Staff, a former airline pilot, has spent three decades researching his subject (including interviewing veterans such as Friedrich Ruge – ironically Rommel's naval adviser when it came to defending Normandy in 1944...), drawing upon German and Russian sources.

Oslo (today Saaremaa) and the adjacent island of Dagö (today Hiiumaa) were lynchpins of the Russian defences on the Baltic Front, guarding the gateway to the Gulf of Finland and ultimately St Petersburg.

By the summer of 1917 with the Tsar toppled and the Russian military increasingly showing signs of dissolution, Vice Admiral Mikhail Bakhirev was dispatched to the Gulf of Riga to oversee the islands' defence.



● The Russian pre-dreadnought *Slava* ('glory') scuttled after her mauling at the hands of SMS *König* during the battle for the Baltic islands in October 1917

Bakhirev – who was executed by the Bolsheviks in 1920 – found the defenders of the Riga islands more willing to hold political meetings than fight.

Bad weather gave Bakhirev a few weeks' grace, but by the beginning of October, it was clear the Germans were coming.

They began bombing Russian batteries, torpedo bombers were dispatched to strike at Russian warships, and Zeppelins released several thousand kilograms of bombs on targets.

As Britain learned at Gallipoli, however, bombardments do not force an enemy to surrender. A barrage must be followed by an assault.

On October 12 1917, minesweepers were sent to clear the approaches to Oslo ahead of the main landings.

Some succeeded, some did not. The battleships Bayern and Grosser Kurfürst were both mined and took on water – but still pounded Russian positions.

To be on the end of the German barrage was a bitter experience.

After several hours of battle, one junior Russian officer was summoned [sic] by his men.

"Mister *Leitnant*, we can fight no more. It is necessary to surrender. To resist further is useless," their leader pleaded.

The officer recalled: "Peering into the crowd I could see only senseless physiognomies grown completely dull from fear. There were about 30 people. To persuade them and even to try to influence them was useless."

As the Germans thrust on towards Arensburg, Oslo's capital, Russian officer Yakov Popov witnessed scenes which would be repeated in the Normandy bocage three decades later.

"A mass of carts and horses was being dragged along the road. To their sides wandered others, exhausted to the last degree, with hung heads as they retreated," he wrote.

It was all, Popov observed, "a sad and depressing sight, painful and offensive, and would bring you to tears."

Some Russian troops fought with utter determination but many

willingly surrendered, delighted that the war was over.

"The camp fires burned, the balalaikas spoke and the dances began," one senior German officer wrote after observing a group of Russian prisoners.

"If the Russian battle spirit was of old, then how long could they have prevented the opening of the straits! This was the result of the revolution."

By the time German troops had swarmed on to the last of the island chain, Moon Island, on the sixth day of battle, Russian discipline had collapsed.

"Officers seemed to fear the soldiers," one Russian lieutenant complained. The mob plundered the stores, stole flour, butter and sugar "by the cart full".

Staff covers both the land and naval sides of the battle comprehensively – and gives equal space to attacker and defender in an account peppered with first-hand experiences (the Russians generally recorded their memories of the battle more vividly).

For Germany it was a cheap victory – a little over 200 dead and a dozen-plus small craft lost.

For the Russians, it was another nail in the coffin of their war machine. Within three weeks, the Bolsheviks had seized power. Within six weeks, they were suing for peace.

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Bahrain held back by makeshift MCMs

A RUGBY squad drawn from HMS Atherstone and Pembroke and the Fleet Support Unit based in Bahrain opened its Gulf 'tour' with a promising draw against a strong Bahraini XV.

The combined Telic MCM side took to the field against Bahrain RFC 2nd XV for a hard-fought encounter which demonstrated that rugby is alive and well in small ships.

The game started well for the MCM side with some strong forward work leading to a sustained period of pressure on the Bahraini line.

When the ball popped out of a Bahraini scrum, blindside flanker ET(ME) Benny Hedges (FSU) was on hand to pick it up and charge over the line to open the scoring.

This seemed to awaken the Bahraini side who then dominated the game for the next 35 minutes scoring 15 unanswered points and in the process displaying some purposeful attacking rugby that left the MCM select XV reeling.

Had it not been for some very strong tackling in the centres by PO(MW) 'Pat' Quintao and AB(D) 'Rocky' Hudson the game could easily have been over as a contest before half time.

After a stern team talk at half time from the side's captain, Lt Sammy Seal (Pembroke), the second half started well for the MCM side.

The forward pack started to gel – not just as a result of the presence of a number of divers in the side who have a well-known affinity for hair products!

The increased pressure soon bore fruit with PO(Diver) Crew (Atherstone) rolling off a maul and setting off on a thundering run from 15 yards out to score under the posts with three Bahrain players still hanging off his shirt.

This put the game at 15-10 to the home side, but with 20 minutes to go and nothing to lose, the MCM squad changed its tactics and began to hoist some purposeful high kicks.

This gave CPO Andy Witton (Atherstone) the opportunity he had been waiting for and, after fielding a difficult bouncing ball and jinking around two Bahraini players, he scored the try of the match to level the game.

The final quarter saw opportunities for both sides to win the game by kicking easy penalties,

but in the spirit of rugby both pushed hard for the winning try although it proved elusive for all.

A draw was a fair result with both teams having played patches of extremely-promising rugby.

Meanwhile, you have to admire the tenacity of the sportsmen of HMS Lancaster.

Bahrain has not been a happy hunting ground for the frigate's cricket, rugby or football teams.

Yet each time the ship puts into the Gulf state for a break from patrolling Iraq's oil platforms, LPT Daz Hoare and his band of merry (sports)men trot out for the honour of the Red Rose.

The cricketers offered the best hope for sporting success after one defeat and one draw with the Taverners.

In a 24-over match, the sailors bowled extremely well and limited the home side to 209. Daz led by example taking 2-15.

And talking of leading by example, Lancaster's CO Cdr Rory Bryan opened the batting response in style.

Unfortunately, after his successful opening partnership, things went downhill and the sailors eventually came up 30 runs short of the Taverners' total.

Lancaster's rugby squad were mauled on their last appearance in Bahrain.

Not so this fixture as they gave the locals a much tougher workout. It took Bahrain 17 minutes to put some points on the board (aided by the fact that Lancaster opened the game with 13, not 15, men thanks to traffic...).

By half time, the score had reached a creditable 12-3, but with a full squad for the second period, Lancaster pegged Bahrain back to 12-8.

Despite heavy Red Rose pressure, Bahrain wouldn't buckle and added a converted try to triumph 19-8.

The ship's footballers opened their encounter with a local side badly – 2-0 down within the first ten minutes.

The next 35 minutes belonged to the sailors, they were only able to convert their constant pressure into one goal.

The pressure on the Bahraini goal intensified after the break, but the Red Rose rhythm was upset by a (dubious) penalty to leave the sailors with a 3-1 mountain to climb, which proved too demanding.



● RNRL's Mark Robinson powers his way towards the Valley Cougars' lines in the Brothers' comprehensive first-round victory

Picture: Ian Lovell Photography, Cardiff

Cup dreams dashed

DESPITE a brave late push RNRL missed out on a place in the draw for the third round of this year's Carnegie-sponsored RL Challenge Cup, writes WO1 Keith Humpleby.

A hard-fought victory in the first round earned the Brothers an away draw at Loughborough University in the second.

Both matches pitted the RN against teams who were somewhat of an unknown quantity and provided great entertainment for the fans.

The Cardiff-based Valley Cougars were the visitors in the first round. Despite poor weather conditions leading up to the match, it went ahead.

After going behind early on to a try scored from a speculative 'up and under' the RN drew level with a try from Jim Barnes resulting from confusion in the Welsh ranks following a missed RN penalty.

The defence were not quite sure what to do and Barnes strode in gathering a loose pass to touch down, giving Dane Smallbone a relatively straight forward conversion.

For the rest of the first half it was virtually one-way traffic as the home side dominated proceedings.

Five further tries were scored, a brace for Tom Boyce and one apiece for Smallbone, Jamie Goss and Danny Johnson. Smallbone kicked a further four conversions to leave the home side cruising 32-6 at the break.

The second half began as the first had finished with the RN eager to press home the apparently unassailable lead with current Man Of Steel Jim Barnes crossing for his second of the day.

As heavy rain was blown into the faces of the RN by an almost-gale-force wind, the Cougars dug deep and found new reserves. Whether it was wearing the Welsh national shirt or just a determination to beat the English, it didn't seem to matter as for a 15-minute period they took the game to the RN and were rewarded with three unanswered tries, two of which were converted to bring the visitors to within 16 points of the hosts at 38-22.

The final ten minutes or so were very tense if you were an RN supporter but the Brothers, once again captained by Jamie Goss, began to turn the tide and prevented the Cougars from closing the gap any further.

That was until the dying seconds of the game when the Welshmen crossed again for another converted try. So after a fantastic spectacle

for the fans RNRL moved into the second round 38-28, Jamie Goss receiving a well deserved 'man of the match' award for another mighty 80 minutes at open side prop and skipper.

So to the East Midlands to take on the students of Loughborough University in the first clash between the sides.

Much was at stake for both teams as neither had progressed beyond the second round before. The students settled first playing on their sloping home pitch and moving into a 12-0 lead after the first quarter.

RNRL got back into the game and the second period definitely belonged to the visitors. A well-worked try finished off by Tim Vonderavallu began the scoring.

More pressure from the RN stretched the home defence and as the clock wound down hooker Mark Robinson crashed over from ten metres out to put his team very much back in contention. Alex Scruton made no mistake with the conversion to bring the sides within two points of each other at 12-10 to the students.

It looked all on for the Navy in the second half, playing down the slope with the wind at their backs and confidence high... but the students went over early on – and although the conversion was

missed the Brothers were behind by six points.

On the offensive for much of the second half, uncharacteristic handling errors at crucial times were the RN's downfall as despite much endeavour they could not break the students' line.

As play reached the final quarter, Alex Scruton closed the gap to four with a penalty, but against the run of play the Uni found space in centre field and good hands saw the ball passed out to the left wing and the try was scored.

The RN came straight back, though this time their hard work was rewarded: Mark Robinson scored a great hooker's try – his second of the game – burrowing over close to the posts. Scruton was on target to bring the RN within two points of the students.

The last few minutes were played at a breathless pace as time and again the Brothers came close. Goss was held up over the line but it was not to be and referee Joe Cobb finally signalled the end of the RNRL 2009 Challenge Cup campaign.

An uncharacteristically inconsistent performance by RNRL was matched by a strong defensive effort by the home side that go into the third round for the first time in their history by 20-18.



Back on Corsa

WITH a newly-built 1,300cc Vauxhall Corsa ready just in time for the 2009 season, motor racer Logs (Pers) Tracey Cotton (DCMC Whitehall) attended the fourth annual Oval Racing Expo and Rolling Thunder Show at Arena Essex Raceway (opposite the Lakeside Shopping Centre).

Five races – two heats, a final and two demonstration races – were the order of the day over the weekend meeting.

The sailor was lined up in 1450 Hot Rod class. After a good start she shot up to fifth position in the race – until clipped by a Fiesta, which sent Tracey into a spin down the straight and on to the centre green. Luckily no-one else caught her and she managed to collect the car and rejoin the race – but at the back of the field. With laps running out, she was unable to claw her way higher than 11th.

The second heat was a brief affair. As the green flag went down, Tracey dived to the left to avoid a Mini which had stalled on the line only to clip the inside wing of another car. The collision sliced her front outside tyre, so that was the end of the race.

With a replacement tyre, she took fifth position in the final race of the first day.

The second day of the meeting was demonstration only – but the competitive spirit was evident: a large number of vehicles left the track rather damaged (thanks not least to a pile-up during the second demo which saw eight of the SEGTO cars having to be towed off the course).

In the first race, Tracey took eighth overall and fourth in class, followed by a victory in the 1450 class (and third overall) in the second demo run.

Photo: PO 'Dutchy' Holland, HMS York

Italians have the last lap

THE Marina Frapa at Rogoznica, nine miles north of Split was the stunning venue for sailing's seventh Croatian Navy Cup.

Teams from the US, Greece, Italy Slovenia, UK and two from the hosts, the Croatian Navy, made up a very competitive fleet with the event being sailed in Salona 37 yachts provided by the sponsors.

The Italian Navy – who maintain a regular professional squad – were firm favourites with the Greeks also including three full-time sailors in their squad.

Despite the inclusion of Lt Cdr Penny Clark team GBR Laser Radial representative at the Qingdao Olympics, it seemed the balance of yachting power lay with the Italians and Greeks.

The first day of racing followed the form books almost exactly. The Italians led followed by the Greeks and Brits on equal points having shared the podium places between them in both races.

However with Penny Clark starting to get to grips with the unfamiliar wheel (apparently you don't have them on Lasers) the omens were looking better for day two.

Alas the wind gods intervened and the deep low which produced winds in excess of 100kts along parts of the

Dalmatian coast was too much for the chartered Salonas, ensuring racing was cancelled for days two and three.

When racing eventually resumed with a passage race from Split to the Croatian naval base, the wind had dropped to 7-8kts.

The UK team picked the right end of the start line, hit it perfectly and finished ahead of all the other navy boats by a substantial margin.

The Italians who had got it all wrong at the start were back in fifth – they could be beaten!

The final day – with the wind gusting between 12 and 26kts – saw some great close-quarter sailing between the Brits and Italians.

Ultimately the Italian edge, honed from sailing together regularly for years, decided the outcome.

The final leg of the last race was sailed with the UK and Italy team boats overlapping from windward mark to finish.

The final gybe on the finish lay-line in 25 kts of wind was executed perfectly by the Italians to break the overlap and take the race.

The plan for next year is to include a practice day which should at least provide some comfort to the teams who first met each other on the plane over.



● The Greeks (in the foreground) chase the Brits and Italians during the Seventh Croatian Navy Cup



● AB Chris Rudkin demonstrates his snowboarding skills during a 'slopestyle' training session at the Inter-Services

Picture: Dominic King

Leaving their 'mark'

Continued from page 52

a bad fall and was no longer able to continue.

Carol Strong fared rather better, taking bronze in both the ladies' slalom and super-combined slalom.

She also bagged sixth place in the giant slalom, ahead of Lt Holly Henderson, Lt Cdr Sam Dunbar and Musn Claire Sawyer who crossed the line in 12th, 13th and 14th positions respectively. For the men, Lt Sharrott came home in seventh place.

In the super giant slalom, Lt Hopkins was the highest-placed RN competitor in sixth, two places ahead of Strong, who in turn was two places in front of Musn Sawyer.

With few top-place finishes, the RN ended the contest in third place behind the RAF and overall winners the Army.

And in St Moritz... The RN were on course to take the Prince Philip Trophy as Inter-Service champions on the legendary Cresta Run.

That was until the final round and a crash for Royal Marine Maj Jamie Summers, who came off his toboggan at Shuttlecock, a notorious bend on the three-quarter-mile ice run.

Before that crash, the Senior Service held a 1.07 second advantage over the Crabs (the Army were out of contention thanks to a smash at Shuttlecock in the first round).

We've saved the best until last, however, and Lt Rachel Morgan who this month represents her nation following a triumph in the Alps.

The officer is an experienced skier having represented the RN between 1999 and 2002 – when a serious accident potentially curbed her sport.

Surgery, support and two

years of pioneering rehabilitation overseen by Headley Court followed – and allowed her to resume both her naval career and her sport.

That said, it was only last year that RN telemark team captain Maj Huan Davies suggested the medical officer resume competitive skiing.

"I'm conscious of the fact that in the Royal Navy telemark skiing is associated with iron thighs and 'Royal', but there are more dark blue Royal Navy personnel in the GB team than Royal Marines," said Lt Morgan.

The net result of all this was victory at the Inter-Services Telemark Championships in Rauris, Austria, over five days of racing.

That led to selection for the GB squad and a crack at the World Cup Finals in Norway this month.

"The Austrian women whom I'd skied against during the Inter-Services invited me to train with them between competitions and really helped me with my skating and jump technique," Lt Morgan explained.

"While the competitive urge is strong, the whole World Cup circuit is pretty tight-knit and looks after its own. So far it has been a fantastic experience and I'm really looking forward to the final races of the season."

As for her fellow RN telemarkers, they came second at the Inter-Services in Austria, with Maj Davies taking a third-place podium finish in the individual men's combined race.

More details on winter sports are available from Cdr Gary Skinnis at HMS Temeraire (9380 27880).

For telemarking, contact Maj Davies at DMOC or CPO Paul Treanor at Haslar.

In the presence of greatness

NORMALLY we don't feature training sessions too often in the sports pages, preferring to focus on competitive clashes.

But it's not every day you are coached by some of the leading proponents of the sport.

And it's even rarer to have said coaching on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier.

With HMS Ark Royal berthed in the shadow of the Liver Building, the coaching staff from Liverpool FC climbed aboard for a unique training session on the flight deck.

Besides balls, the coaches – led by 60s and 70s Anfield star Brian Hall (voted No.75 on the club's list of all-time greats; Kenny Dalglish, Steven Gerrard and Ian Rush top the table) and Scott (brother of Robbie) Fowler – brought along a replica of the 2005 Champions League trophy.

Having been royally hosted by Ark, the footballers responded in kind by inviting the sailors to Anfield. They were given a tour of the famous stadium by two Liverpool legends, Ron Yeats and Ian Callaghan, and touched the iconic 'This is Anfield' sign before walking out on to the pitch ahead of the team's derby clash with Everton (a 1-1 draw as it turned out).

"What an experience," enthused Cdr Al 'Rocky' Salmon, Commander Air. "I have been a Liverpool fan all my life and I'm not usually star-struck, but to be in the presence of true Liverpool gentlemen is an honour."

Away from Merseyside... With the Inter-Services drawing near, all the RN representative sides have had busy fixture lists.

The women lost 4-2 to a strong Keynsham side that included international players; Surg Lt Steph Ingram scored both Navy goals towards the end of the match.

Our women also lost 2-0 to Portsmouth Ladies. A strong first-half performance from the RN was goalless, despite some good chances, notably a header against the bar from Ingram which could have sent the sailors into half time one-up and would have boosted confidence. But ultimately, the slicker passing and general match fitness of the Pompey women saw them turn out winners of this entertaining game which saw some promising debuts.

The first home fixture for the U18s in the South East Counties Cup was a narrow 3-2 defeat to a strong Surrey County team.

In the first half the RN were disappointed to concede after some poor marking. They reacted well and deserved their equaliser



● Coach ship... Liverpool FC coaches work out with Ark Royal's footballers on the carriers flight deck during the visit to Merseyside

Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready, HMS Ark Royal



Onside with Capt Paul Cunningham, RNFA

after an excellent move and fine finish from AB Ross Hoyland (Raleigh).

Half time came at the wrong moment for the Navy, who were well on top. Surrey must have received some stern words as they came back strongly after the interval.

After 15 minutes of sustained pressure, the opposition were rewarded with two quick goals. The Navy then made three changes introducing Evans (Neptune), Spinks (Collingwood) and Nick Faucher (Somerset); this revitalised our youngsters and the game opened up and Navy pressure resulted in a well taken goal by Craig Hatton (Neptune) after an excellent pass from Faucher.

Surrey were very complimentary to the RN in the post-match speeches, stating it was the strongest RN youth team they had played against for many years.

This all bodes well as we continue to prepare for the Dallas Cup. The first nine players of the squad were informed of their

selection after the match.

I don't often report veterans' matches, but our more mature representatives enjoyed a 4-2 victory over the Prison Service with two goals from Kevin Maddox, one from Fraser Quirke and a 'screws' own goal. Go vets!

The U23s have also been busy. Their match against England Schools at the FA Headquarters, Lilleshall, was abandoned after 55 minutes due to a frozen pitch; the score at the time was 0-0.

They then enjoyed a 2-0 victory against London University with first-half goals from Mne Hibditch (FPGRM) and LMEA Mitchell (Sultan). This was a strong team performance where AET's Gibson and Buckler (Culdrose) also caught the eye.

That means the team remain undefeated this season and the players can be proud of their achievements to date. But with the business end of the season approaching, with a tour to Gibraltar followed by the Inter-Services, no-one is taking anything for granted.

The Senior team's game against Havant & Waterlooville Academy was very keenly contested and our men deserved a first-half lead through Mne Dan Boere, although H&W were guilty of missing a twice-taken penalty early in the game which could have influenced the outcome.

The opposition made amends early in the second half with an equaliser and the remainder of the game saw some good play but no more goals. LPT Dave Berry (Coaching Staff Man of the Match) and LAET Russ Hardwell once again put in fine performances.

This year's home Inter-Service game is on Wednesday March 11, kick off at 7.30pm. The match is due to be played at Fratton Park against the Army and entry will be free.

Please come along to support the Navy for what is our biggest match of the season, where we are honoured that Lord Triesman, the Chairman of the FA will be our guest of honour.

In addition the Inter-Services women's home match will be played against the Army on the March 19, kick-off 2.30pm at Victory Stadium (Temeraire).

The redesigned RNFA website will be going live on March 4 and any queries should be directed to the RNFA office on 02392 723974.



Paddle power almost victorious

SIX ducks, all in a row... This is the RN men's (obviously – Ed) canoe polo team who came within a whisker of the Inter-Services title on home 'turf'.

The men – left to right, Lt Matt Twisleton, PO Lee Chapman, Lt Paul Bastiens, LA Taff Dolan, CPO Gus Gusterton and PO(ACMN) Taff Davies – went into the second day of the competition at HMS Temeraire with one hand on the trophy.

Unfortunately, they still had the Army to face – and the soldiers ran out 3-2 winners following a tough tussle.

In all, 75 competitors took to the pool in Portsmouth over the two days of the event – like water polo but in canoes, hence the name – which was skilfully organised by Yeovilton's Lt Matt Twisleton.

The soldiers and airmen were impressed not only by Temeraire's facilities but also the accommodation on offer over the weekend. The Royal Navy didn't end the weekend trophy-less.

AET Steve Riley (RNAS Culdrose) collected the CS Ally Ramsay Trophy as the person who had made the greatest contribution to Service kayaking in the past 12 months.

Steve is one of the best marathon and sprint competitors in the Services.

More details on the sport – and kayaking in general – from the intranet site (www.navykayaking.dii.rmil.uk) or Lt Cdr Joe Wood, RNKA secretary (9380 22590).

Next month



Tanks for the memories – 40 years of Clockwork in Norway



Presence all year round – on Falklands patrol with HMS Clyde



Auxiliary power – life aboard RFA Black Rover

Plus

Succour punch – the RFA's crucial front-line role

SPORT



● Queen of the slopes... Lt Rachel Morgan on her way to the Inter-Services' telemark title

Leaving their 'mark

CREDIT crunch. Financial crisis. Pound at an all-time low against the Euro.

Yep, 2009 has opened in pretty gloomy fashion...

...unless you love winter sports.

For amid the doom and gloom hijacking the newspapers, tucked quietly away amid the weather reports was news of the earliest snow falls for the start of the season and resorts all over Europe experiencing the best skiing and boarding conditions in memory.

As the advance party organising the Royal Navy Winter Sports Association 2009 Alpine Championship made their way down the autoroutes of France, the welcome sight of significant snow on the ground and blue skies raised spirits and hopes were high for the two weeks of training and racing which lay ahead.

On arrival at Les Ménuieres, it became obvious that although the start had been good more snow was definitely needed in the three valleys as patches were starting to show through some of the mountain slopes.

Alas it was not to be, with high pressure sat over Europe it was blue skies every day for the first week and no fresh snow, bar a small midweek evening flurry.

With no more snow forecast things were looking gloomy for week two.

That said, spirits were not dented and the majority of the runs were open even if the snow parks were closed.

The race piste itself was in great condition and things were looking good for the first race on the Friday. The strong Euro meant that although prices around the three valleys were higher than normal, the slopes were some of the emptiest ever experienced.

Numbers this year topped

1,000 personnel over the fortnight and a change in emphasis saw more people not just taking the opportunity to hone their skills with lessons but also to try racing, many for the first time.

To help develop confidence and remove any myths about racing, all the lessons for intermediate and advanced skiers during the first week incorporated a race training session.

At the same time there was dedicated daily race training for those wishing to develop their slalom and GS techniques. For those completely new to boarding and skiing, beginners' classes for each week culminated in the ever popular and very social Thursday night floodlit races on the Bruyeres piste.

As Saturday of the first week drew to a sunny close there was rumour of snow to come, and boy did it.

Sunday started with grey skies, then 24 hours of snowfall – so much in fact that there was danger of the race schedule being thrown into disarray.

Luckily it stopped in time for racing and the second week saw excellent snow conditions both on and off piste.

Skiing and snowboard squads used the conditions to their advantage getting in plenty of practice, prior to the Inter-Services competition. The increase in snow also saw an increase in accidents around the slopes, with some not even making it through the day.

A salient reminder that winter sports are not without risk: just ask yourself if you would ride a motorbike at 50mph without protection, let alone without a helmet?

There was a battle royal in the Super G and Giant Slaloms between Royal Marine Steve Cotton and the Fleet Air Arm's Lt

Chris Sharrott.

The green beret took the honours in the giant slalom (2m 38.23s over two runs), four seconds faster than the aviator.

The FAA skier nudged his rival into silver in the Super G, coming home three-quarters of a second faster than the commando. BRNC's Carol Strong was the fastest female down the slopes in both contests, just ahead of the FAA's Lt Kate Hopkins.

Honours in the Slalom A went to the astonishingly swift Debs Bhattacharaya who posted a time seven seconds faster than his closest rival, CTCRM's Dave Hart.

In the women's event, Lt Hopkins came home three seconds quicker than Strong. (You can see all the race results at www.rnwsa.co.uk.)

The bad news finally came on the Friday, when racing had to be cancelled due to rain. As the sun set and temperatures dropped, the rain turned into 24 hours of snow and ice and transfer day in the Alps was thrown into chaos once again.

As the RNWSA banner came down, it was time to bid farewell to Les Ménuieres after six successful years; next year the championships move to the other side of the Parc National de la Vanoise and the resort at Tignes between January 9 and 23.

Meanwhile, in the next valley... Hot on the heels of the RN contest came the Inter-Service Ski and Snowboarding championships in Méribel.

The event was blessed with fine weather, but the Senior Servicemen and women were not blessed with good fortune on the slopes, which didn't help the RN's chances of upsetting the Army and RAF's dominance.

Three members of the RN snowboarding team were *hors des*

combats after suffering injuries: team captain LS(SR) Susie Cook, Lt Will Alexander (both during the snowboard cross qualifier), and HMS Heron's CPO Mick Arrowsmith, who injured his shoulder in the first run of the men's parallel giant slalom.

Luckily, the senior rating had a gong to cheer him up. Mick

was recognised with the most outstanding achievement award for his years of dedication to the sport.

On the ski slopes, the course proved to be particularly daunting (41 gates spread over a run course which dropped 660 metres). Cpl Mike Gent (RM Poole) suffered

Continued on page 51

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This is a spacer page to allow the following cutaways to appear correctly, just click on to the next page



- 1 Bow parking chocks

2 4.5in twin barrel mountings

3 Starboard steam catapult positioner

4 Port steam catapult positioner

5 Forward aircraft lift

6 VHF D/F W/T mast (lowered)

7 High angle director control tower

8 Control range blind fire director

9 982 air search radar

10 983 height-finding radar

11 Forward lattice mast

12 Seahawks in parking area

13 Bomb lift

14 Deck edge lift

15 32ft motor cutter (outboard)

16 40mm 6 barrel Bofors

17 Jumbo crane

18 40mm single Bofors

19 After tripod mast

20 Fork lift trucks

21 Crash barrier

22 Mirror angle landing site

23 36ft motor pinnace

24 27ft whaler

25 7½ ton boat crane

26 35ft medium speed motor boat

27 16ft dingy

28 Aircraft arrester wires

29 After aircraft lift

30 Life rafts

31 HF D/F W/T mast (lowered)

32 Sea Venom aircraft

33 Sea Hawk landing

34 40mm twin barrel Bofors

35 D/F frame coil

36 Battle conning position

37 Auxiliary aircraft plot

38 Radar office (Type 982 and 983)

39 Main signal office

40 Visual signalling deck

41 Compass platform

42 Captain's sea cabin

43 Charthouse

44 Navigating officer's sea cabin

45 Lt Cdr (F) sea cabin

46 Officers' WC's

47 Bridge pantry galley

48 Staff officers' cabin/office

49 Third wireless office

50 Junior rates' heads

51 Bofors ready-use magazine

52 Type 964 radar aerial

53 Admiral's closed bridge

54 Admiral's sea staff

55 Flying control position

56 Upper operations room

57 Bridge wireless office

58 No.1 VHF UHF office

59 Boiler uptakes

60 Fire control workshop

61 Electronic equipment store

62 Battle honours board

63 Type 262 local maintenance office

64 Carrier controlled approach room

65 Admiral's bridge mess

66 Admiral's sea cabin

67 Lower operations room

68 Radar display and AEW control room

69 Bridge officers' bunk space

70 No.3 transmitter room

71 Radar office (Type 960) and annexe

72 Radar metadyne (Type 982/983)

73 DBU compartment

74 Chief of staff sea cabin

75 Signal officer's sea cabin

76 No.1 Briefing and ready room

77 LP distribution centre

78 Meteorological office

79 Aircraft control room

80 Aircraft handling party ready room

81 Flight deck officer's ready room

82 Derrick masts (stowed)

83 Steam catapult pump compartment

84 Junior rates' dining hall

85 Saluting guns

86 4.5in mounting gunbay

87 Mess office

88 Scullery
- 89 General mess pantry

90 Galley and servery for broadside messes

91 Preparing room

92 Kitchen

93 Vegetable preparing room

94 Cooks' bathroom

95 Senior rates' heads

96 Potato and vegetable store

97 Cool room

98 Beef screen

99 Steam catapult positioner machinery

100 Aircrew refreshment bar

101 Aircraft lift machinery

102 Bofors magazine

103 Metadyne room

104 Bridge mess pantry galley

105 Officers' bridge mess

106 Electronics maintenance room

107 DBU compartment and 275 LMA

108 Gun crew shelter

109 Engine room artificers' mess

110 Engine room artificers' bathroom

111 Engine room artificers' heads

112 Engine room artificers' lockers

113 Gym gear store

114 Officer's cabin (single berth)

115 Gun direction room and annexe

116 No.2 V/UHF room

117 Electronic issue room

118 WB office type 293Q

119 Barber's shop

120 No2 briefing and ready room

121 S/G and A/G spare gear store

122 Close range weapon workshop

123 Boiler downtake

124 Seamen's mess

125 Royal marines' barracks

126 A/C M/G compartment

127 Sergeant of marines

128 W/T mast (lowered)

129 Type 262 LMA

130 Junior rates' bathroom

131 Naval store

132 Officers' cabin (3 berth)

133 Officers' cabin (2 berth)

134 Officers' cabin (4 berth)

135 Officers' cabin (5 berth)

136 Flying clothes locker room

137 Admiral's galley

138 Depth charge storage

139 Smoke room

140 LP room

141 Cable deck

142 Ship's store

143 Cleansing post

144 Ice cream and soda fountain

145 Watchkeepers' mess

146 Aircraft electrical workshop

147 Aircraft hydraulic and oleo shop

148 Aircraft instrument repair shop

149 Regulating office

150 Gun machinery compartment

151 Air ordnance store

152 Aircraft repair metalworkers' machine shop

153 Bofors store

154 Aircraft general cleansing shop

155 Airlock

156 Air workshop office

157 Aircraft welding shop

158 Workshop issue centre

159 Depth charge pistol compartment

160 Senior rates' bathroom

161 Steam catapult receiver compartment

162 Aircraft launching bridle store

163 VHF D/F room

164 Catapult workshop

165 EMR air radar and W/T

166 Hangar extension aircraft repair space

167 Oxygen charging room

168 Hangar equipment store

169 Cooks' mess

170 Squadron air engineers' office

171 Air maintenance control office

172 Air ratings' bathroom

173 Ready-use RP magazine

174 Air ratings mess

175 Ammunition repairing room

176 Ready use small arms magazine



- 177 Chaplain's cabin
- 178 Hangar doors
- 179 Upper hangar A bay
- 180 Flying clothing cloakroom
- 181 Royal Marines' heads
- 182 Royal Marines' bathroom
- 183 Bandmaster's mess
- 184 Shipwrights workshop
- 185 Shipwright's ready use store and office
- 186 Acetylene store
- 187 Spare boat gear store
- 188 Motorboat engine workshop
- 189 Diving gear store
- 190 Upper transmitting room
- 191 Potato locker
- 192 Officer's bathroom
- 193 Master-at-arm's mess
- 194 Band instrument room
- 195 Gunners' store
- 196 Decontamination clothing store
- 197 Upper hangar B bay
- 198 Cabin for commanders
- 199 Captain's day cabin
- 200 Captain's sleeping cabin
- 201 Captain's WC and bathroom
- 202 Admiral's pantry
- 203 Admiral's dining cabin
- 204 Admiral's day cabin
- 205 Duplication office
- 206 Typing office
- 207 Admiral's rating office
- 208 Staff office
- 209 Distributing office
- 210 Admiral's officers' office
- 211 Senior officer's bathroom
- 212 Senior officer's WC's
- 213 Admiral's spare cabin
- 214 Admiral's sleeping cabin
- 215 Admiral's bathroom
- 216 Chief of staff's bathroom
- 217 Chief of staff's sleeping cabin
- 218 Chief of staff's day cabin
- 219 Shipwright's store
- 220 Capstan machinery
- 221 Medical store
- 222 Chief petty officers' mess
- 223 Bread cooling room
- 224 Ship's bakery
- 225 Ready-use flour store
- 226 Dental surgery
- 227 Main canteen
- 228 Provision issue room
- 229 Victualling office
- 230 Bookstall
- 231 Isolation ward
- 232 Officers' ward
- 233 Main sickbay ward
- 234 Operating room
- 235 Sickbay office
- 236 Surgical dressing room
- 237 Main electrical store
- 238 Supply ratings' mess
- 239 Potato store
- 240 Aircraft spare part store
- 241 Camera room
- 242 Air bottles
- 243 Canteen kiosk
- 244 Damage control equipment workshop
- 245 25ft fast motorboats
- 246 Oxygen store
- 247 Tyre store
- 248 Lower hangar X bay
- 249 Lower hangar Y bay
- 250 Parachute hanging room
- 251 Blacksmiths and enginesmiths' workshop
- 252 Bomb tail store
- 253 Auxiliary transmitter room
- 254 Coppermiths and plumbers' workshop
- 255 Studio
- 256 Sound recording equipment
- 257 Cinema reviewing room
- 258 Battery charging room
- 259 Aircraft armament workshop
- 260 Mail office
- 261 Guest room
- 262 Quarterdeck
- 263 Westland Dragonfly

inside HMS ARK ROYAL

insideHMS ARK ROYAL IV

Class: Audacious-class Fleet carrier
Pennant number: R09
Builder: Cammell Laird, Birkenhead
Motto: Zeal does not rest
Sponsor: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth (the future Queen Mother)
Laid down: May 3, 1943
Launched: May 3, 1950
Commissioned: February 25, 1955
Decommissioned: February 14, 1979
Scrapped: Cairnryan, Scotland, 1980-84
Displacement: 43,340 tons (53,340 tons fully loaded)
Length: 808 ft
Beam: 158 ft
Draught: 36 ft
Speed: in excess of 30 knots
Complement: 1,632 to 1,745 ship's company; 2,295 to 2,345 with embarked squadrons. Average age of ship's company: 21
Galleys: Six choices of meal provided at meal times in two dining halls. Chefs used 3,600 eggs, 1½ tons of meat, seven tons of potatoes daily. They baked 6,000 rolls and 300 loaves each day
Propulsion: 8 x Admiralty drum-type boilers working at 400 lb per square inch pressure; Parsons geared turbines, four shafts producing 152,000 shaft horsepower
Cost: £21,428,000 (c. £400m today)
Armament: 8 x twin 4.5in guns, 5 x sextuple 40mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns, 2 x twin 40mm Bofors, 7 x single 40mm Bofors, 4 x 3 pdr Aircraft (First commission): c.50 including Hawker Sea Hawk, Fairey Gannet, Douglas Skyraider, De Havilland Sea Venom, Westland Dragonfly, Westland Whirlwind
Some random facts: The electricity generators produced 9 Megawatts of power (the next-generation carriers can produce 108MW – enough electricity to power Swindon); the osmosis plants produced 1,000 tons of water every day



IN THE annals of the post-war R name of one ship resonated – and to resonate – louder than any othe Perhaps it was the name she inherited from her forbear, scourge of the Nazis. Perhaps it was her endearing and enduring patron. Perhaps it was the iconic image of the schoolboy wandering down a Merseyside street, the gleaming white Ark and the gannets of Cammell Laird towering over him. Perhaps it was a television documentary series – and a flag-waving hit single to accompany it. Perhaps it was the spirit and soul of the thousands of men

Whatever, HMS Ark Royal IV is the ship which defines the Royal Navy of the Cold War era. It is a story which begins not on Merseyside, nor even by the sea, but among those dark Satanic mills and cobbled streets, soot-blackened terraced houses and imposing public monuments to the industrial revolution. The people of Leeds 'adopted' Ark Royal III barely a week before she was sunk in November 1941. The loss spurred them on to raise more than £9m – roughly £300m today. Their generosity ensured the name Ark Royal would live on. And so it was that Princess Marina, the Duchess of Kent, 'laid the keel' on May 11 1943 (eight days after shipwrights had actually begun work...) and hull number 1119 began to take shape. 1119 would grow for the next seven years. With the veil of wartime secrecy lifted she would assume her true name. It was not Princess Marina but Queen Elizabeth – in years to come the Queen Mother – who performed the honours on a spring day in Birkenhead in 1950. More than 50,000 people watched the carrier enter the water for the first time on May 3. It would be four more years before she put to sea, however, and February 1955 before she was formally commissioned. Our illustration depicts Ark in the latter end of that first commission, during which time she underwent a few tweaks; the six-barrel Bofors gun in front of the island was removed, as was the HADT on the port forward gallery. A mirror landing sight sponson was added on the port side abaft the deck edge lift. At this stage she did not sport the famous R09 pennant number on the side of her island, or the code R on the flight deck – these were introduced by the 2nd commission. A sizeable proportion of her brief first commission was spent in the Mediterranean, partly conducting trials and tests, partly as a showpiece for the RN and NATO. Her second commission, 1956-58, was only slightly longer than her first, but it did see a magical tour of the USA, including a first visit to New York, berthed a stone's throw from the legendary liner Queen Mary. The days of the liner were numbered thanks to the jet age – and the revolution in air power in the 1950s. Sea Hawks and Sea Venoms gave way to Scimitars and Sea Vixens. The 60s was a decade of huge social, economic, political and technological change – and many, if not all, these factors impacted on Ark's third, fourth and fifth commissions. Between the tail end of 1959 and October 1966, the carrier was "run very hard" by a succession of exercises, marathon



of Suez and, increasingly, dealing with the ring of 1966, Ark was dispatched to east he newly-formed Beira patrol, enforcing sanctions against Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe) which had illegally declared its independence. The decision to commit Ark came just days after Whitehall pulled the plug on the future carrier programme, deciding it didn't need seaborne air power... For the time being, it certainly did, however. Between 1967 and 1970, £32m (roughly £400m today) was ploughed into Ark ahead of her sixth and final commission. That commission would be her longest and most (in)famous. A dozen Buccaneers were her punch, two-seat Phantoms her shield, aided by a quartet of Gannets on airborne early-warning duties. Seven Sea Kings searched for enemy submarines, and one Wessex was on stand-by for Search and Rescue duties. The commission began in controversial fashion; having shadowed the carrier very closely, a Soviet Kotlin-class destroyer got too close and clipped the carrier. Two Russian sailors died in the collision. The government blamed the RN. Questions were asked in Westminster. A Board of Inquiry convened. Ark's captain was cleared; the Red Navy was at fault (as it admitted privately...). After infancy, eventually came fame... thanks (a little) to the RAF. When the Air Force turned down a new-style of documentary series – a 'fly-on-the-wall' programme – the RN said "yes" and invited a four-strong BBC team aboard to cover Ark's US deployment. The result was *Sailor*, first aired in August 1976. Aided by a No.1 theme tune by Rod Stewart, a dramatic high-seas rescue, a string of characters and a puppet who sailed rather close to the wind, the programme set the benchmark for every documentary about the military for the next three decades. But TV star or not, it could not save HMS Ark Royal. In February 1977, the government announced the carrier would be out of service before the end of 1978. Ark's ship's company had hoped she would remain in service until her successor HMS Invincible (ironically launched 27 years to the day) joined the Fleet. But it was not to be, but at least Ark Royal went out with a bang, not a whimper. She took pride of place at the Silver Jubilee Fleet Review on June 27 (her fin visit to Portsmouth, as it turned out), hosting the Queen, Duke of Edinburgh, then Prime Minister Jim Callaghan and every available commanding officer in the Fleet. She exercised with NATO, with the French, she spent four months in the Americas, exercised some more with NATO, hosted the Queen Mother for the final time, paid a farewell visit to Gibraltar – and to Malta, too, where 10,000 people waited to see her – and witnessed the very last fixed-wing aircraft (Gannet 044 of 849 Naval Air Squadron B Flight) to land on her hallowed flight deck. The fast jets and propeller-driven aircraft departed – a Phantom held the distinction of being the last aircraft catapulted from Ark – before the ship entered Devonport for the final time on December 4 1978, trailing a 450ft decommissioning pennant. There were plans to save her – notably as a floating museum on the Thames at Greenwich – but in the end she went for scrap, towed out of Plymouth Sound in September 1980. Over the next four years, breakers at Cairnryan, near Stranraer, tore her apart. Some of her remains. An anchor at Yeovilton. The admiral's cabin in a Scottish hotel. The memories live on. And so too the name.

